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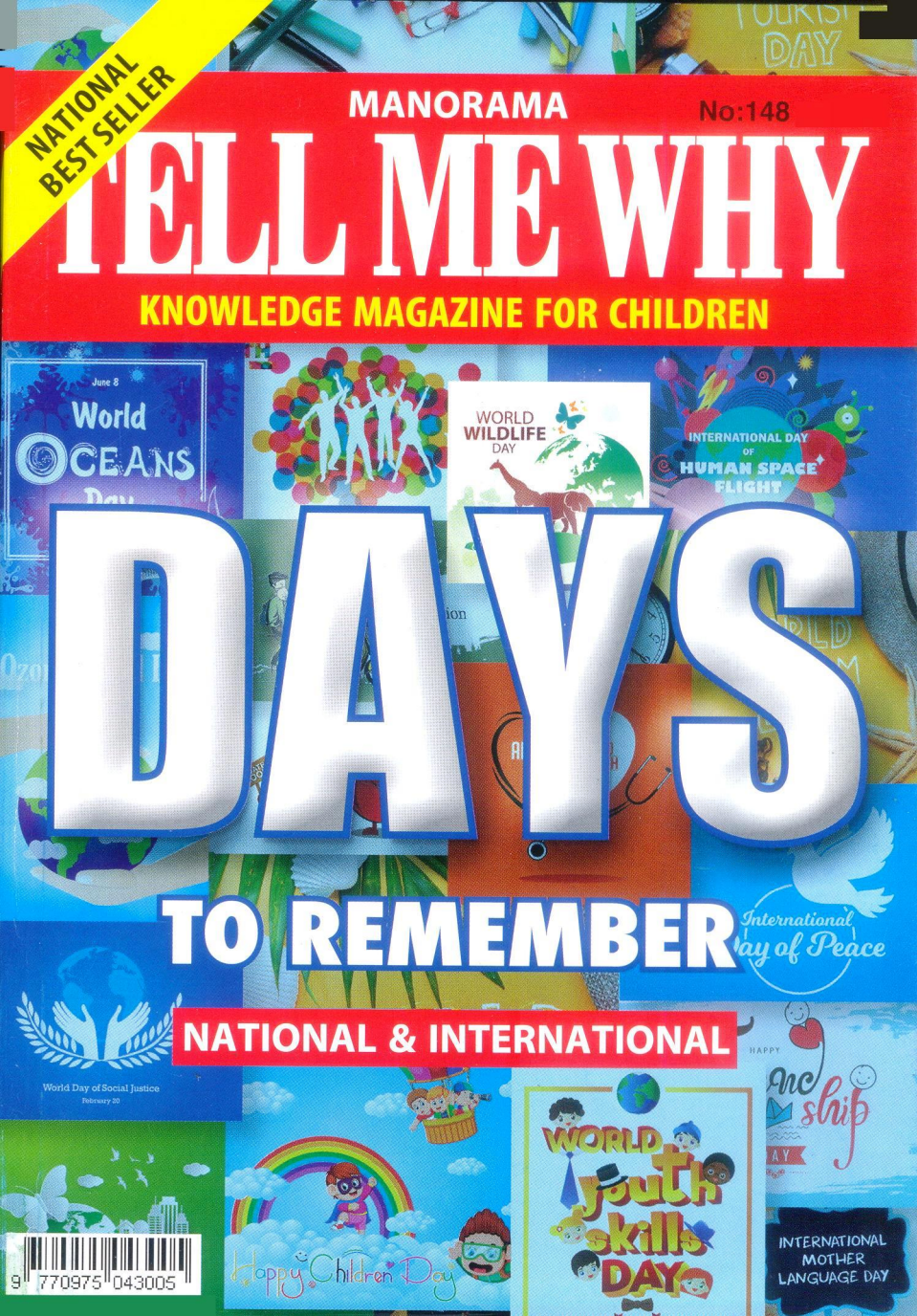
TELL ME WHY

KNOWLEDGE MAGAZINE FOR CHILDREN



DAYS TO REMEMBER

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MANORAMA
TELL ME WHY
January 2019 • Volume: 13 • No: 01
FROM THE HOUSE OF MAGIC POT, THE WEEK, MANORAMA YEARBOOK, VANITHA & THE MALAYALA MANORAMA DAILY

DAYS TO REMEMBER

Every year, October 2nd brings the inspiring and soothing memory of a great soul who gave the message of peace. It is the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, and the United Nations Organisation has designated this day as the International Day of Non-violence.

There are several such important dates, etched deep in the collective memory of the world. Some bring good memories and send inspiring messages. Some evoke memories that are bad and hurtful, and remind us of history's painful lessons, and of the need to be on the alert.

This issue of *Tell Me Why* tells you about many such days that are recognised as International Days of Observance. It also covers other days of importance, like National Days and some dates specifically of importance in this year. For instance, the 500th death anniversary of Leonardo da Vinci falls this year. So also does the 100th year of the tragic massacre at the Jallianwala Bagh.

Turn the pages to read about all these days and more.

January
27

INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

What is special about January 27?

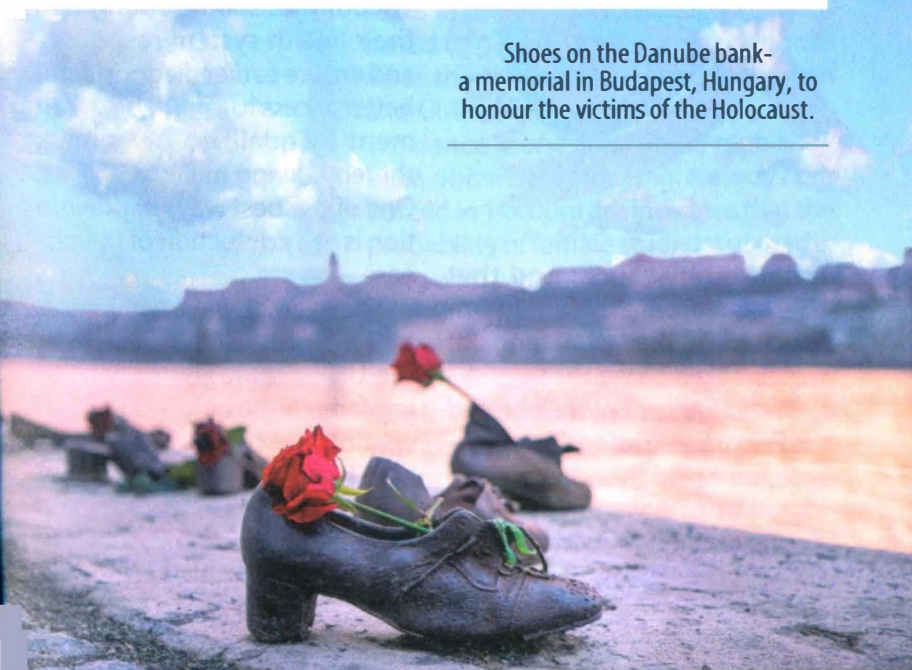
The world would have been a happier place if certain events had not happened in history. Between 1941 and 1945, when nations were engaged in World War II, Nazi Germany systematically murdered six million Jews in Europe. One of the most heinous genocides in human history, the Holocaust is a sad testimony to the depths of Man's cruelty and brutal-

Auschwitz- Birkenau, the largest of the Nazi concentration camps, located in Southern Poland.

ity could reach! The world commemorates January 27 as the International Day of Remembrance in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust.

The United Nations devised an outreach programme called the United Nations Outreach Programme to tell the world about the need to prevent other instances of such cruelty. The initiative was designed to encourage developing educational curricula on the subject of the Holocaust to mobilize the civil society for education. Many programmes were launched to recall the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to warn people of the dangers of hatred, bigotry, racism and prejudice.

A number of activities, including special events, film screenings, discussion papers from leading academics, information materials, partnerships with intergovernmental organizations and many other initiatives were undertaken to encourage awareness about fascism, and the concentration of power in individuals.



Shoes on the Danube bank- a memorial in Budapest, Hungary, to honour the victims of the Holocaust.

February 4

WORLD CANCER DAY

Why do we observe World Cancer Day?

Cancer is probably the most dreaded disease in the world today. Statistics claim that about one in six deaths among humans

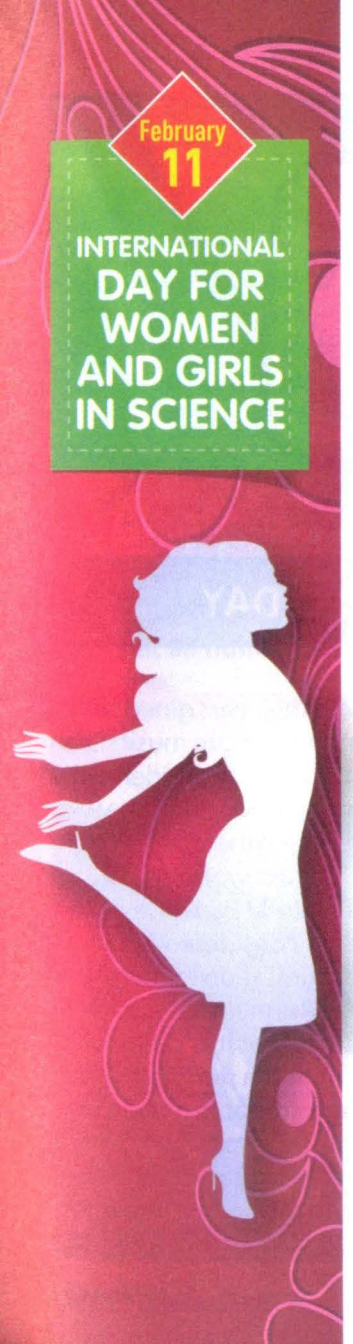
is caused by cancer and that there is hardly any family untouched by the lethal fangs of this deadly disease.

World Cancer Day, celebrated on February 4, intends to reassure the world that cancer is no longer a death warrant. There is a concerted effort world over to contain the illness, to improve the chances of survival and to enhance quality of life of people living with cancer.

There is much more the world can do than it is doing now. Dr. Etienne Krug, WHO Director for the Department for Management of Non-communicable Diseases, thinks that nations across the globe should act upon the causes of the disease and prevent them from occurring in the first place.

Countries should strengthen their health system responses and ensure earlier diagnosis and better access to affordable treatment by qualified personnel, thereby saving millions of lives. One of the best ways of prevention is early detection of the disease.

The year 2018 was an important year for cancer control as the UN encouraged nations to implement the blueprint of prevention and control of cancer at the Third High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases.



Which day is dedicated to celebrating gender equality in science?

Most societies in the world are patriarchal, meaning that men hold all the power, and women are excluded from the power structure. Traditionally, women have played second fiddle to men in various socio-political and cultural scenarios. While men were the rulers of the land, holders of important jobs and breadwinners for the family, women were mostly confined to the four walls of the home, taking care of children and doing household chores. Many attempts and interventions have been made for bringing about equality between both sexes in the society. February 11 is dedicated to gender equality and celebrated as the International Day for Women and Girls in Science.

Science is one area where men have been dominating for long. A study conducted in 14 countries indicates that the probability of female students of graduating with a Bachelor's degree, Master's degree or Doctor's degree in science-related field is 18 per cent, 8 per cent and 2 per cent respectively. The study also indicates that in the case of men it is 37 per cent, 18 per cent and 6 per cent. Nations today believe that gender neutrality in science is essential for the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the 2030

February 13

WORLD RADIO DAY

Agenda for Sustainable Development. The United Nations declared the International Day solely with the view of ensuring gender equality and empowerment of women and girls in science and technology.

Is there a day dedicated to the radio?

Long before the internet or television was popular, the radio ruled the world! People at home eagerly waited in front of radios for their favourite programme and young people in streets were seen with their ears glued to the machine listening to music! Even today, the radio is considered the mass medium reaching the widest audience in the world. In honour of the radio, we hold February 13 as the World Radio Day.

Radio is considered a powerful communication tool at a very low cost. The main advantage of the radio is that it is suitable for communities in remote areas. It is also an affordable medium for vulnerable people such as the illiterate, the disabled, women, youth and the poor. It also offers a platform to intervene in the

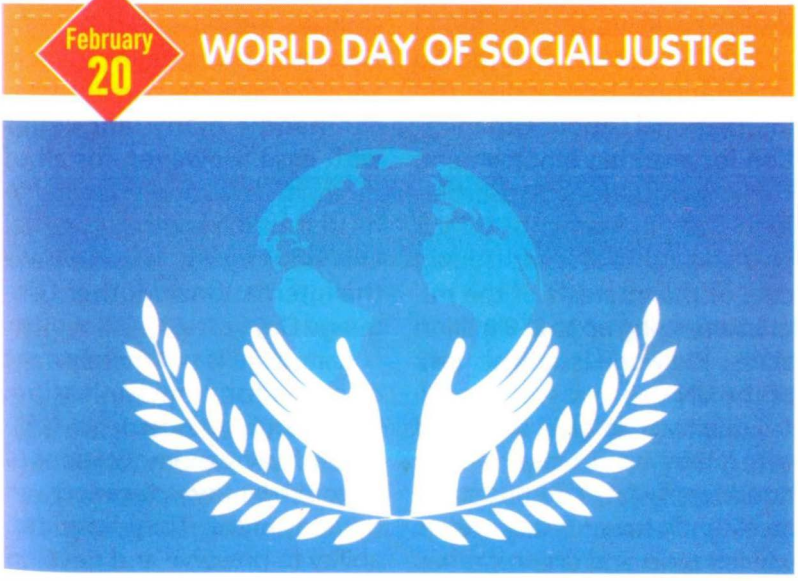
public debate, irrespective of people's educational level. Radio has a strong and specific role in emergency communication and in disaster relief too.

An amazing quality of radio is that it has managed to adapt to the changes and challenges of the 21st century. A ubiquitous medium, radio finds a place in homes, workplaces and automobiles.

What is the significance of the World Day of Social Justice?

All societies seek equality. The idea that all human beings are equal is based on the concept of social justice. For peaceful and prosperous coexistence within and among societies and nations, the principle of social justice is an important element. February 20 is celebrated as the World Day of Social Justice.

The core of social justice is in promoting human dignity. People face inequality in many ways. Economic inequality, gender inequality, racial and caste inequality and inequality in terms of opportunity are some of the ways society is divided. The principles of social justice



promote equality on all counts and advocate removing barriers that split society in terms of age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, nationality and disability.

The UN has constituted an international body called the International Labour Organization for ensuring employment, social protection, social dialogue, and fundamental principles and rights at work. Taking care of the interests of the migrants ranging up to 258 million across the world is another task of the UN.

Equality is an ideal state and often an impossible dream; however, if states do not strive incessantly towards it, societies will fall apart and disintegrate.

Why is February 21 an important day?

Language is a complex system of codes used for communication between human beings. How many languages do you know? There are persons who can handle many languages with ease. However, for all of them, their favourite language must be their mother tongue! On February 21, we celebrate the International Mother Language Day.

Language is not merely a set of codes for communication. Every language carries a baggage of complex implications of culture, identity, education and development. They have the ability to preserve and develop

our culture and heritage. Due to various political circumstances, certain languages assume more importance than others. For example, the English language is studied around the world because of British colonialism. However, there are innumerable languages in the world that need protection. Studies say that at least 43 per cent of the estimated 6000 languages spoken in the world are endangered and are on the brink of extinction.

All efforts to preserve mother tongues will result in awareness of and respect for diverse traditions throughout the world and will promote solidarity.

March 3 WORLD WILDLIFE DAY

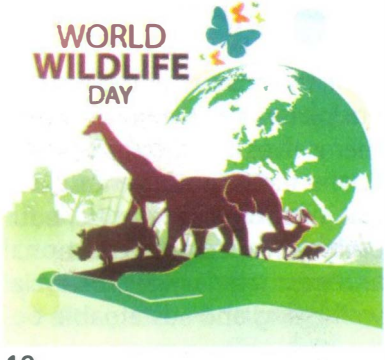
Why is Wildlife Day celebrated on March 3?

We are not the only beings in the world, and we are not the lords and masters of the other living organisms around us as well.

All the animals and plants on our planet have a worth within themselves and they contribute to the ecological, genetic, social, economic, scientific, educational, cultural, recreational and aesthetic aspects of social well-being and sustainable de-

velopment. Therefore, it is apt to celebrate World Wildlife Day on March 3.

The theme of the Wildlife Day in 2018 was 'Big Cats: Predators under threat'. The world's beautiful, big feline predators are facing various kinds of threats from human activities. Many measures are being taken to arrest their declining population.



World Wildlife Day provides an opportunity to celebrate the many exquisite and diverse forms of wild animals and plants. Such a day can help raise awareness about the multitude of benefits that conservation of the wild provides to people. However, the day also reminds us of the urgent need to step up the fight against wildlife crime and human-induced reduction of species, which have wide-ranging economic, environmental and social impact.

March 8

WOMEN'S DAY

Why is the International Women's Day celebrated?

The world has to undergo an urgent change when it comes to its attitude towards women. Women are often sidelined and ignored when it comes to playing bigger roles in society. In certain communities, girl children are still unwelcome.

International Women's Day, celebrated on March 8, is an attempt to raise awareness regarding the equality between genders and the importance of providing an opportunity for women in society. International Women's Day is a call for change and an occasion to celebrate acts of courage and determination by ordinary women who have played extraordinary roles in the history of their countries and communities.

In its Agenda for Sustainable Development, the UN has set some important targets for empowering women. It aims to provide all girls and boys free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education.

Providing access to quality early childhood development, ending all forms of discrimination against women, eliminating all forms of violence against them and putting an end to practices, such as child marriage, are some of the key targets of this agenda.

March 20

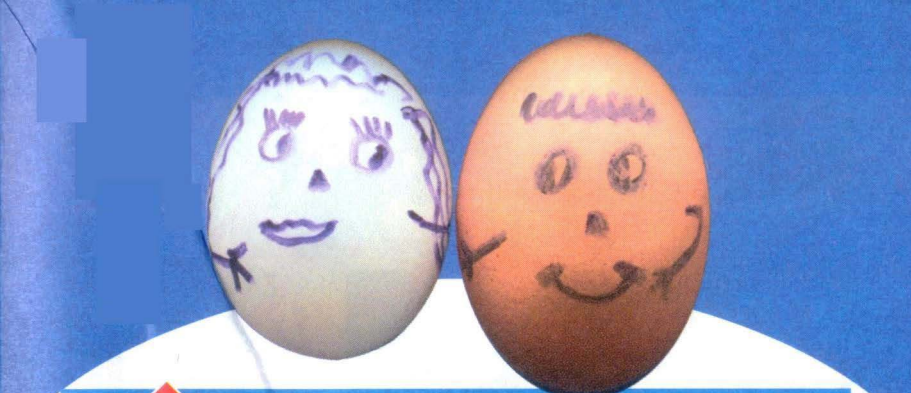
INTERNATIONAL DAY OF HAPPINESS

What is the relevance of the International Day of Happiness?

Have you heard the story of a king who ordered a hunt for the shirt of the happiest man in his kingdom? When his servants finally found the happiest man, he had no shirt! Beyond all his cares and longings, Man ultimately wants to be happy. In acknowledgement of this great truth, March 20 is recognized as the International Day of Happiness.

What is the purpose of the International Day of Happiness? Of course, it is a day to be happy! However, it is also an occasion to recognize the importance of happiness in the lives of people around the world. There are millions of people in the world devoid of happiness due to several factors. A UN resolution in 2015 has sought to end poverty, reduce inequality, and protect our planet, the three key points that lead to the well-being and happiness of people.

Being happy is everyman's right. Controlling the factors that lead to the loss of happiness of people all over is not only the responsibility of the governments but also of every individual.



March 21

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATIONOF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Why should we have a day against racial discrimination?

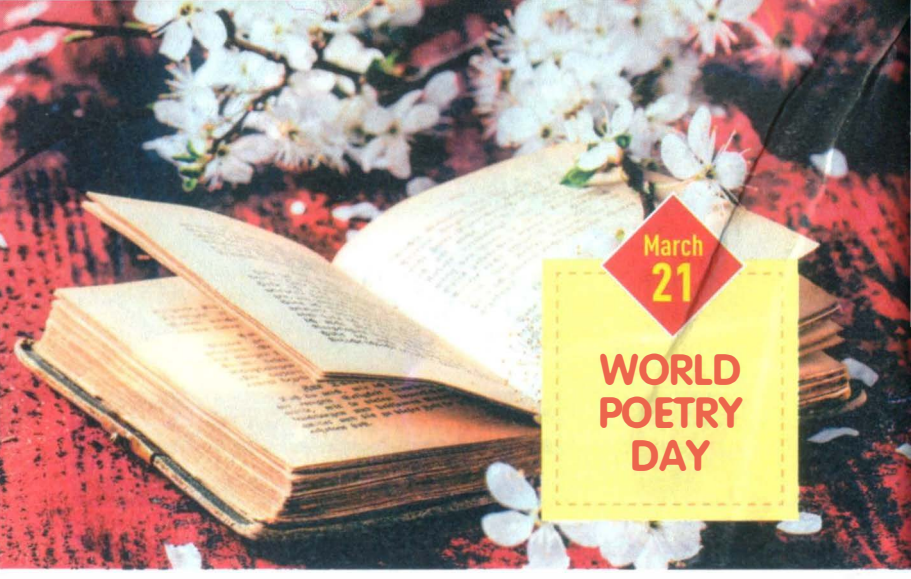
Racism is one of the evils that the world is facing even today. For hundreds of years, men and women have been held slaves because of the colour of their skin.

In the slavery that existed in the Americas and Europe, black men and women were not even considered human beings. This evil practice was legally banned after incessant interventions by great men like Abraham Lincoln, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. However, racial discrimination exists in various forms even today.

March 21 is recognized as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Human dignity is the foundation stone for human rights. Every individual is entitled to human rights without discrimination. Governments across the globe have recognized the importance of the rights to equality and non-discrimination.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

Most societies are afflicted by racism, xenophobia and intolerance. Minorities are discriminated against, and migrants are treated with hatred and cruelty. The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is a reminder to all of us that we should all stand up against racial prejudice.

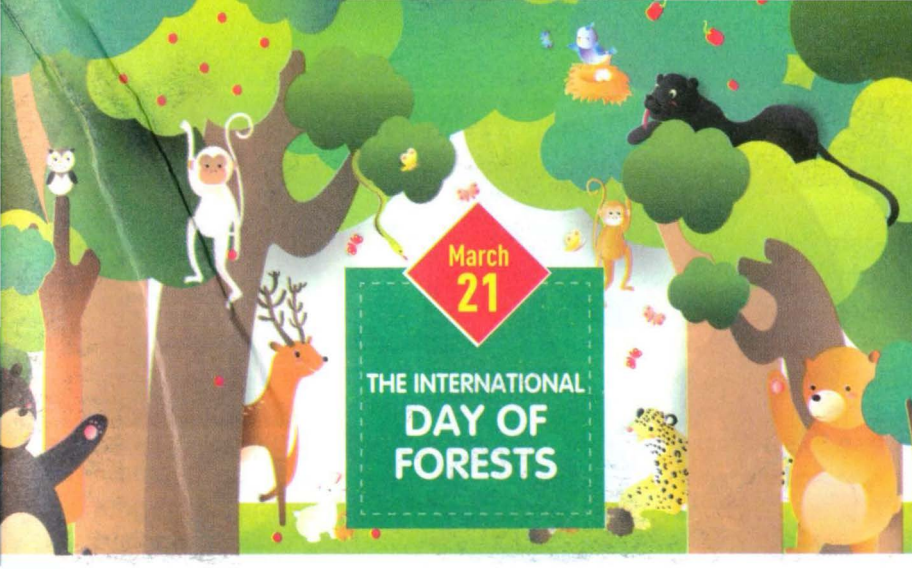


Which day is celebrated as World Poetry Day?

Poetry is often said to be the food for the human soul. A medium for the deep thoughts and feelings of mind, poetry has a universal appeal. Poetry has the unique ability to record the creative spirit of the human soul; and therefore, we have a dedicated day for celebrating poetry. World Poetry Day falls on March 21.

Why, do you think, we celebrate the 16th century poet Shakespeare even today? It is because the poems and plays written by him living in a distant land and in an alien cultural background still have a universal value to which people across the globe can relate. Poetry has the distinct ability to affirm humanity by revealing through choicest words that the angst and agony of individuals are the same across regions.

World Poetry Day attempts to support poets and poetry from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. It also offers an opportunity to return to the oral tradition of poetry recitals, to promote the teaching of poetry, to restore a dialogue between poetry and the other arts such as theatre, dance, music and painting, and to support small publishers.



Why should we celebrate the International Forest Day?

Forests are the lungs of the earth. Without them, life on Earth is impossible. Therefore, when we celebrate the International Day of Forests on March 21, we are providing a platform to raise awareness of the importance of all types of woodlands and trees, and celebrate the ways in which they sustain and protect us.

Forests are an indispensable part of our life. They store carbon, which helps reduce the impacts of climate change in and around urban spaces. They also help improve the local climate. During these times of soaring heat, placing trees in certain strategically significant areas can cool the air by up to 8 degrees Celsius. Thus, trees, in fact, can replace air-conditioners. They are effective air-filters too, as they sieve out harmful pollutants in the air.

Forests can filter and regulate water too. They help increase the quality of groundwater supplies. Flooding is to a certain extent prevented by trees. Forests can provide us with fresh fruits and nuts, provide habitats for animal diversity, and boost tourism.

Thus, they encourage an active and healthy lifestyle, improve mental health, prevent disease and provide a place for people to socialize and commune with nature.

Why is World Water Day an important day?

Can we survive without water? An essential building block of life, water is much more than a vital commodity for quenching our thirst or protecting health. It is an indispensable material for the economic, social and human development of a nation.

It is imperative to hold an International Water Day when there are about 663 million people who live without safe water supplies. World Water Day is observed on March 22.

Although more than 70 percent of the earth's surface is covered with water, clean drinking water is not as abundant. Water-related crises are erupting every day as environmental damage and climate change are happening rapidly. The world is looking forward to overcome the water challenges of the 21st century.

Communities in general and individuals in particular have to partake actively in water conservation initiatives. We have to explore nature-based solutions, such as planting new forests, reconnecting rivers to floodplains and restoring wetlands as they will rebalance the water cycle and improve human health and livelihoods.

March 23

WORLD METEOROLOGICAL DAY

What is the significance of World Meteorological Day?

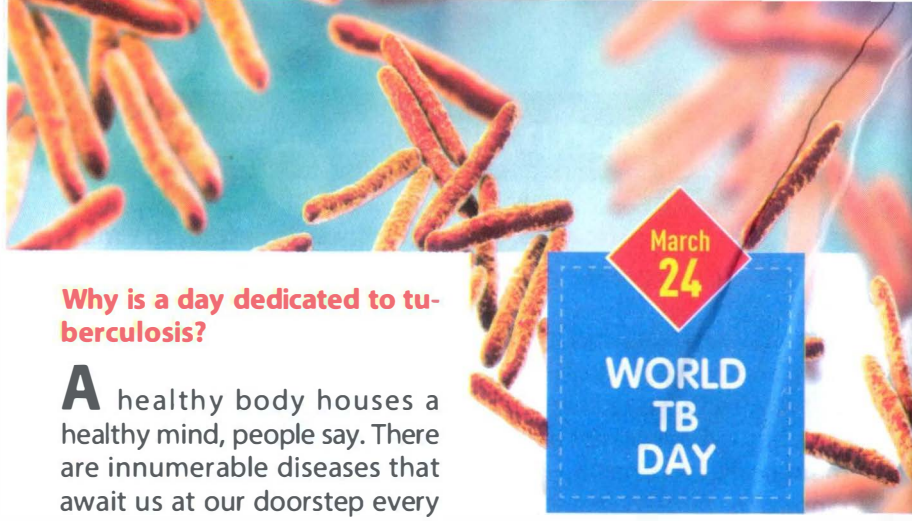
Our Earth is not what it used to be a few hundred years ago. Natural change along with massive human intervention, has led our planet to an environmental crisis. As a result, we face a wide range of hazards today, such as tropical cyclone storm surges, heavy rains, heat waves, droughts and many more. Therefore, in order to spread awareness, the World Meteorological Day is held on March 23.

Climate change is no longer about mere themes of science fiction novels and films; we face it in our everyday life. The weather is turning extreme in some regions. Sea levels are rising and acidification of the oceans is taking place at a fast pace. Life seems more and more vulnerable as urbanization is spreading. Therefore, the message of the day is to be weather-ready, climate-smart and water-wise!

World Meteorological Day is an occasion to set our priorities right and take initiatives to protect the lives, livelihoods and property of people from risks related to weather, and climate and water.

One of the ways of readying people for imminent dangers is by installing early warning systems and implementing various disaster-risk-reduction measures.

If nations do not start executing policy level decisions regarding climate change, our planet will soon become inhospitable to life.



Why is a day dedicated to tuberculosis?

A healthy body houses a healthy mind, people say. There are innumerable diseases that await us at our doorstep every day; and thanks to modern medical science, we keep most of them at bay.

Some diseases, however, have managed to stay untamed and have taken the lives of millions of people. Tuberculosis is one such malady that has claimed millions of lives so far.

We observe World TB Day on March 24 to raise public awareness about the devastating health, social and economic consequences of tuberculosis and to step up efforts to end the global TB epidemic.

Medical interventions have helped considerably in containing the disease in many parts of the world. However, TB continues to be the top infectious killer worldwide, claiming over 4,500 lives a day. A new version of the disease called 'multidrug-resistant TB' is a major threat to the ongoing efforts.

World TB Day is aimed at building a commitment to end TB, not only at the political level with Heads of State and Ministers of Health, but also at the grass root level. Therefore, everyone should be brought to awareness programmes and incorporated into the fight against this deadly disease.

Why should there be a day dedicated to the memory of slaves?

Today's generation would find it difficult to believe that human beings were once sold

March 25

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE OF THE VICTIMS OF SLAVERY

in markets like vegetables or stationery.

However, the history of our civilization testifies that slavery, an inhuman system of treating humans without any due respect did exist for centuries. Therefore, it is apt to dedicate a day for remembering the victims of slavery and March 25 is the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

One of the darkest episodes of human history is about the transatlantic slave trade in which more than 15 million men, women and children were put up for sale and spent their lifetime under inhuman conditions. It existed for about 4 centuries. The International Day offers the opportunity to remember and honour the victims who suffered and succumbed to death in the cruel system of slavery.

In honour of the victims, a memorial has been erected for the slaves known as the Ark of Return at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

April 2

WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY

What is the aim of World Autism Awarenes Day?

Autism is a serious developmental disorder that impairs the ability of an individual for communication and social interaction. April 2 is observed as the World Autism Awareness Day.

Such a dedicated day for autism can raise awareness about people with autism. The day was designed to focus on the importance of empowering men and women affected by autism and involving them and their representative organizations in policy and decision making to address their challenges.

As is generally observed, girls with disabilities are less likely to complete primary school and most of them drop out of educational institutions. There is less likelihood of any institution providing them employment as well.

World Autism Day also prepares a platform for discussions about fully exercising rights in matters relating to marriage, family and parenthood on an equal basis with others without the disability.

Psychiatrists say that autism should not be seen as a disability, disease, disorder or impairment. It is just that some people are different from the rest. Therefore, autism calls for awareness among those unaffected by it rather than those who have it.

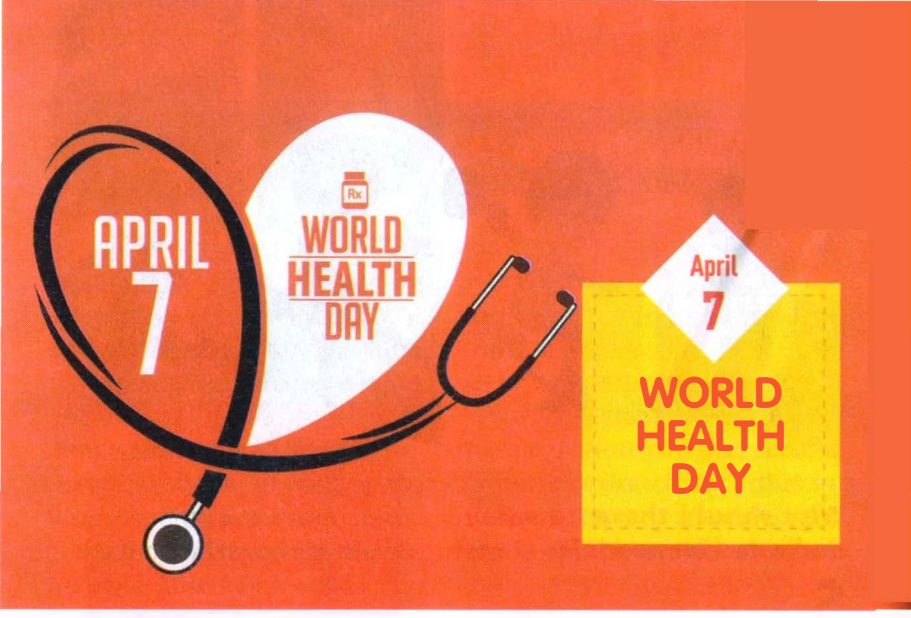
Why should there be a day dedicated for sports?

Some thinkers like William James have suggested that wars, undoubtedly destructive affairs, should be replaced by a moral equivalent such as sports and games!

Can you imagine two disputing nations settling scores in a football match? By celebrating April 6 as the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace, the UN suggests that sports should be promoted as a fundamental right of individuals and it should be encouraged among the youth as an effective choice for physical and psychological health.

Sport is a powerful tool to attract, mobilize and inspire people. It plays an important role as a promoter of social integration and economic development. More than any other activity, playing a game together will strengthen social ties.

Sport is usually considered a universal language. One of the chief qualities of sport is its insistence on teamwork, fairness, discipline, respect for the opponent and adherence to rules. While it may not stop or solve a bitter conflict, it can be reliably considered as a flexible and cost-effective medium for peace building and conflict prevention.



Why does the world celebrate World Health Day?

Health is the greatest wealth man can possess, people say. To keep body and mind free of ailments is not only a good practice, but also an individual's responsibility towards oneself and society. Realizing the importance of being healthy, we celebrate April 7 as World Health Day.

The World Health Organization started the observation of World Health Day from 1950. It was held to mark the beginning of the WHO. For the organization, the observation was an opportunity to draw each year worldwide attention to the subject of personal and global health.

There is considerable interest among nations across the globe in acknowledging and celebrating World Health Day. Various governments and non-governmental organizations organize awareness related activities and highlight their support to healthy living in media reports.

Health does not merely mean being physically fit and devoid of any illnesses. It means the overall well-being of a person. World Health Day intends to spread this message to people across the world.

April 12

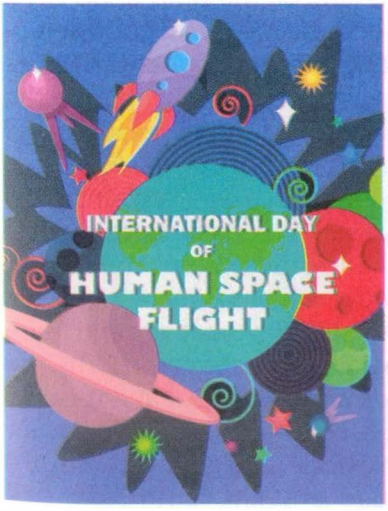
INTERNATIONAL DAY OF HUMAN SPACE FLIGHT

What is the importance of April 12?

The sky, the sun, the moon and the stars have fascinated Man for thousands of years. Ancient man probably hoped, in the depth of his heart that he would someday go up in space to the moon or the stars.

Today, Man has exceeded his own expectations and knows the secrets of space and galaxies outside our planet. The International Day of Human Space Flight, celebrated on April 12, is meant to acknowledge the important contribution of space science and technology and to maintain outer space for peaceful purposes.

The first man to have reached space was Yuri Gagarin, a Soviet citizen; and 12 April 1961 was the date of the first human space flight. Hence, it is apt to celebrate the day on April 12. This historic day inaugurated Man's quest to explore space for the benefit of humanity.



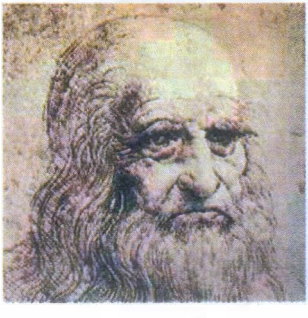
Yuri Gagarin

April
21

WORLD CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION DAY

What is the purpose of celebrating the World Creativity and Innovation Day?

The progress of human civilization depends on Man's ability to create and innovate. Man lives not just by bread alone; if not for his imagination and creativity, he would have been merely another animal. On April 21, the world celebrates Man's ability to be creative, as the World Creativity and Innovation Day.



Leonardo da Vinci

Ancient Man scribbled and doodled images of animals and the other men around him, on the walls of his cave. Some of these men were good at representing the world around. Culture and civilization began with man the artist. In the 21st century, creativity and innovation at both the individual and group levels have been recognized as the true wealth of nations. Now we realize that creativity is not confined to artistic expressions alone.

The first World Creativity and Innovation Day was celebrated in 2018. The day has another speciality: it is observed six days after Leonardo da Vinci's birthday and one day before International Mother Earth Day!

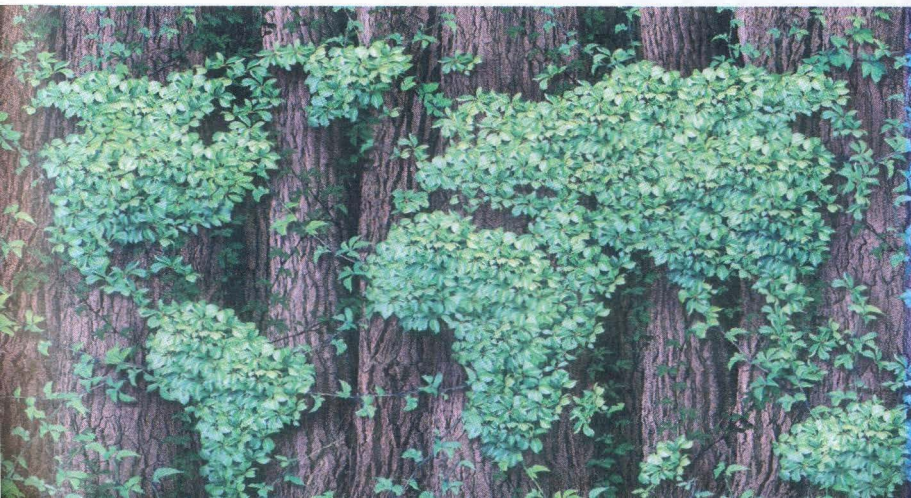
April 22

INTERNATIONAL MOTHER EARTH DAY

Why should we observe the International Mother Earth Day?

The Earth we inhabit is not merely a home to us; it is our mother. Our existence depends on the earth. The importance of the earth lies in the fact that we are yet to find another planet that is even remotely comparable to her. There is only one Earth, no other like her; and therefore, appropriately, we have the International Mother Earth Day celebrated on April 22.

We had once believed that Man was the crown of creation and therefore the lord and master of nature. However, today, we know that Man is but a spoke in the wheel of nature. Harmony with nature and the earth is necessary to achieve proper balance among the economic, social and environmental factors in society. If Man does not acknowledge the symbiotic co-existence among organisms and curb his urge to exploit nature of its resources, he will gradually drag himself to his own grave. Therefore, the International Mother Earth Day sets us a warning in the direction of establishing a sustainable, Earth-friendly, and other oriented development.



April 23

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAY

Why does the English Language Day fall on April 23?

The English language has assumed so much relevance and significance nowadays. English is considered the language of the learned and is the most essential requisite for higher education and employment. English, the native tongue of the British, spread to the rest of the world due to colonialism and imperialism. The English Language Day falls on April 23, the date on which Shakespeare, the English poet and playwright, is believed to have been born and died.

William Shakespeare is not merely the poet of a particular nation anymore. The consummate dramatist and his world-renowned poems and plays have assumed such universal appeal and value. His writings have been translated and adapted to most languages in the world. His contribution to the English language in terms of vocabulary and phraseology is immeasurable. The English language has become richer because of Shakespeare.

The UN has established language days for each of the organization's six official languages. The official languages are Arabic, Chinese, French, English, Russian and Spanish.

What is special about May 3?

Reading newspapers or watching the news on television, has become part of our daily life. We assume that whatever we read, watch or understand through

May 3

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY

the media is true. Have you ever thought about a situation where newspapers and news channels do not exist at all?

The press is one of the most celebrated pillars of democracy. A nation where the press does not enjoy freedom cannot be regarded as truly free. Therefore, the World Press Freedom Day is an important occasion to ponder over the right to freedom of expression and creativity. The world celebrates such a day on May 3.

This observance is an opportunity to celebrate the fundamental principles of press freedom, assess the state of press freedom throughout the world, defend the media from attacks on their independence and pay tribute to journalists who have lost their lives in the line of duty. It also holds the press responsible as a watchdog, fostering transparency, accountability and the rule of law.

The World Press Freedom Day is celebrated on the anniversary of the Declaration of Windhoek, a UNESCO seminar held in Windhoek, Namibia, upholding press freedom principles by African newspaper journalists.

Second Saturday of May

WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY

Do migratory birds need a special day?

The Earth is not a space exclusively for humans. There are many other beautiful living and non-living phenomena in the world.

We should acknowledge and respect other life forms as cohabitants of this magnificent planet. Birds, especially migratory birds, have suffered greatly at the hands of human beings in many ways. Hence, the World Migratory Bird Day is an important occasion to think about how humans should create a conducive atmosphere for other life forms.

The World Migratory Bird Day is celebrated on the second Saturday of May. It is a UN sponsored global awareness-raising and environmental education campaign focused on migratory birds and the need for international cooperation to conserve them.

Scientists have estimated that one in five of the entire 11,000 bird species is a migratory bird. About 40 per cent of them are said to be in decline; one in eight is threatened with global extinction! The major threats to migratory birds are habitat loss and degradation. Migratory birds are also heavily affected by poisoning.

May 15

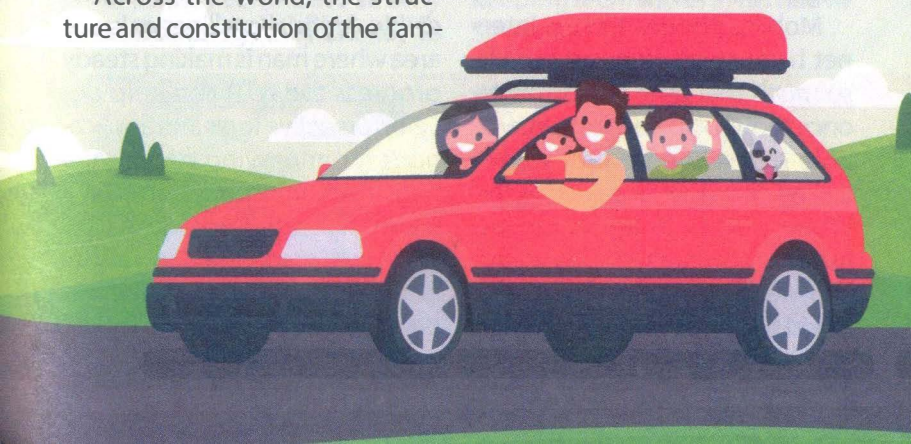
INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FAMILIES

When is International Day of Families observed?

A child learns to be an adult in a family. A family is the first school where children learn love, kindness, respect and humanity. A sound upbringing with proper interventions by parents will undoubtedly result in the character formation of an individual. Although the definition of family may have changed over the years, this miniature community remains the foundation stone of most societies. Acknowledging the importance of family, the United Nations has assigned May 15 as the International Day of Families.

Across the world, the structure and constitution of the family has undergone changes. Large and joint families have now given way to nuclear families consisting of the parents and a child. While modernity and novel philosophies have made inroads into the popular conception of family, the UN still recognizes it as the basic unit of society.

The day provides an opportunity to promote awareness of issues relating to families. The UN has planned various awareness-raising events such as workshops and conferences, radio and television programmes, newspaper articles and cultural programmes highlighting relevant themes.



May 17

WORLD TELECOMMUNICATIONS DAY

What is the relevance of the World Telecommunication and Information Society Day?

Today, the world has shrunk to become a small village, thanks to the communication boom. Your friend in a faraway land seems as close as someone sitting in the adjacent room.

Mobiles phones and the Internet have revolutionized our life so much that time and distance, once thought to be Man's untamable rivals, can be easily controlled. May 17 is observed as the World Telecommunication and Information Society Day to acknowledge the great change the world has undergone because of the developments in communication. The day is observed in order to help raise awareness regarding the possibilities about the use of the Internet and other information and communication technologies provide. They have immense prospects as Information and Communications Technology can bridge the digital divide. Artificial Intelligence is one area where man is making steady progress today. It can help develop proactive tools and applications for improving healthcare, education, transportation, and a wide range of other services. May 17, in fact, marks the anniversary of the formation of the International Telecommunication Union.

May 20

WORLD BEE DAY

Should we observe a day for the bees?

Do you think that bees give us only the honey they produce? Scientists say that without bees life would be difficult. Bees are vital to humanity and the world we live in because they are the most efficient pollinators of plants. Therefore, the World Bee Day, observed on May 20, is very relevant today.

Statistics say that bees and other pollinators, such as butterflies, bats and hummingbirds, are increasingly under threat from human activities. They, in fact, help many plants, including food crops, to reproduce.

While they contribute directly to food security, they are key to conserving biodiversity too. Bees are sometimes recognized as sentinels for emerging environmental risks, signaling the health of local ecosystems.

Bee colonies are increasingly under threat due to invasive insects, pesticides, land-use change and monocropping practices, which may reduce available nutrients.

The purpose of an International Day for bees is to raise awareness of the importance of pollinators, the threats they face and their contribution to sustainable development. The day also coincides with the birthday of Anton Jansa, who in the 18th century pioneered modern beekeeping techniques in his native Slovenia.

May 29

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF UN PEACEKEEPERS

Which day is dedicated to the International UN Peacekeepers?

What the world needs today more than anything else, is peace. Two world wars and many civil wars have left people across the world poorer and deeply distrustful. Powerful countries are still in the process of exercising control over smaller countries.

In such disturbing times, it is a welcome gesture from the United Nations to intervene in situations of conflict with the help of their peacekeepers.

On May 29, the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers, the world pays tribute to all the men and women who have served and continue to serve in the UN peacekeeping operations.

The day is also an opportunity to commemorate the memory of those who have lost their lives in the cause of peace. The UN Peacekeeping Force was founded in 1948. The force helps countries torn by conflict to create conditions conducive to lasting peace. More than 3,700 peacekeepers have lost their lives during their service. More than a hundred personnel were killed in conflict zones, in 2017. Millions have served under the UN flag in 71 peacekeeping operations, so far.

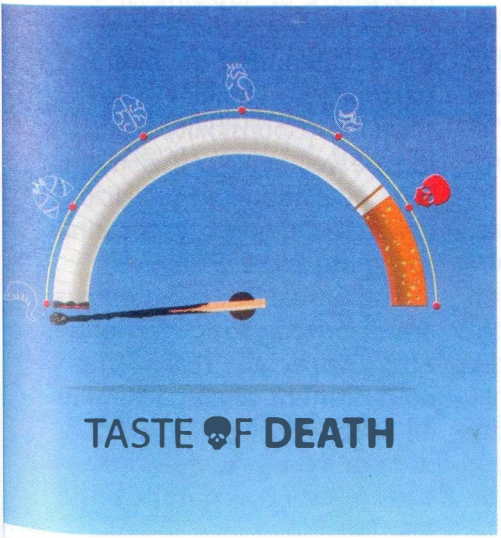
May 31

WORLD NO-TOBACCO DAY

Why do we observe the World No-Tobacco Day?

One of the leading causes of death today, tobacco use is considered a risk factor for many diseases that affect the heart, liver and lungs. Its smoke contains carbon monoxide, cyanide and carcinogens that can trigger many cancers in the body. Therefore, the World Health Organization marks May 31 as the World No-Tobacco Day.

On the World No-Tobacco Day, a range of global initiatives and opportunities aimed at addressing the tobacco problem have been initiated highlighting tobacco's impact on public health, particularly in causing the death and suffering of millions of people globally.



One of the actions is focused on "Tobacco and heart disease". The campaign is designed to increase awareness on the link between tobacco and heart and other cardiovascular diseases, including strokes, which are the world's leading causes of death.

The day advocates taking feasible actions and measures by governments and the public, to reduce the risks to heart health posed by tobacco.

The World No-Tobacco Day calls for effective policies to reduce tobacco consumption across the world.

June 1

GLOBAL DAY OF PARENTS

Why is it important to celebrate a day for family?

In Indian tradition, father and mother are considered equal to God. While some other cultures share similar views, most societies in the world hold parenthood in high esteem.

Parents are an important factor in the development of a child in the process of becoming an adult. Therefore, parents are honoured on June 1 as the world celebrates the Global Day of Parents.

The international community has been paying special attention to the important role of the family since the 1980s.

Growing up in a family environment that provides an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding is vital for the development of children's personalities. Families have the supreme responsibility of ensuring the well-being of their members, educating and socializing children and youth, and caring for young and old.

The Global Day of Parents is an opportunity to acknowledge and appreciate the selfless commitment of all parents in all parts of the world to children, and their sacrifices in nurturing life-long parent-child relationship.

June 3

WORLD BICYCLE DAY

Why is there a World Bicycle Day?

Do you know to ride a bicycle? Most people learn to ride one at a young age. The main reasons for the popularity of the bicycle are that it is a simple, affordable, reliable and clean means of transportation. Its environment-friendliness is an added attraction. World Bicycle Day, observed on June 3, was officially celebrated for the first time in 2018.

The bicycle is a sustainable transportation vehicle. It creates a positive impact on climate. World Bicycle Day promotes the use of this simple vehicle in international, regional, national and subnational development policies and programmes. The day encourages improving road safety and integrating bicycles into sustainable mobility and transport infrastructure planning and design.

In many countries, people prefer bicycles to cars, as they need no fuel and do not harm nature. Therefore, the day will encourage states to promote bicycles among all members of society. In this regard, there must be initiatives to organize bicycle rides at the national and local levels as a means of strengthening physical and mental health and well-being and developing a culture of cycling in society.

June 5

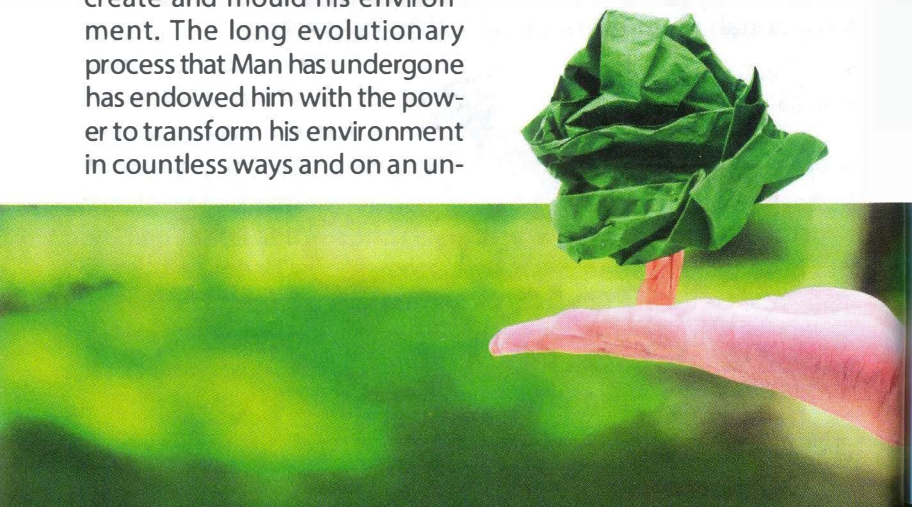
WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

What is the relevance of the World Environment Day?

The environment is all living organisms, climate, weather and natural resources interacting together in totality. Every being is comfortably placed in its environment so that it can flourish according to the laws of nature. Our environment is so crucial to our existence that inordinate human interventions can lead to devastating results. The World Environment Day, celebrated on June 5, tells us about the importance of the environment.

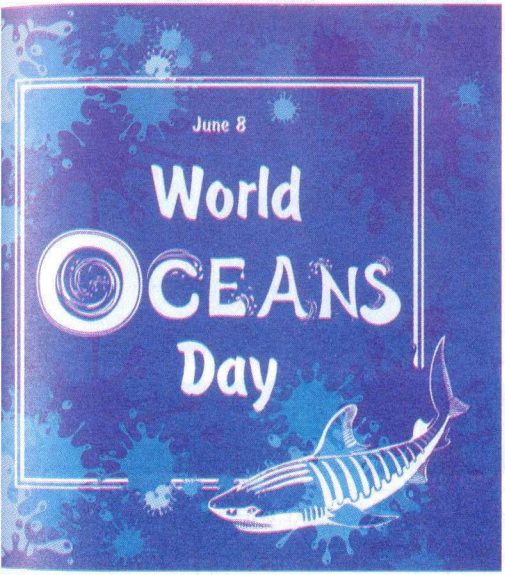
Man has the distinct ability to create and mould his environment. The long evolutionary process that Man has undergone has endowed him with the power to transform his environment in countless ways and on an unprecedented scale. It provides him with physical sustenance, and offers him the opportunity for intellectual, moral, social and cultural growth.

The focus of the World Environment Day observance is on the protection and improvement of the human environment, which affects the well-being of peoples and economic development throughout the world. It calls for an enlightened opinion and responsible conduct by individuals, enterprises and communities in preserving and enhancing the environment.



June 8

WORLD OCEANS DAY

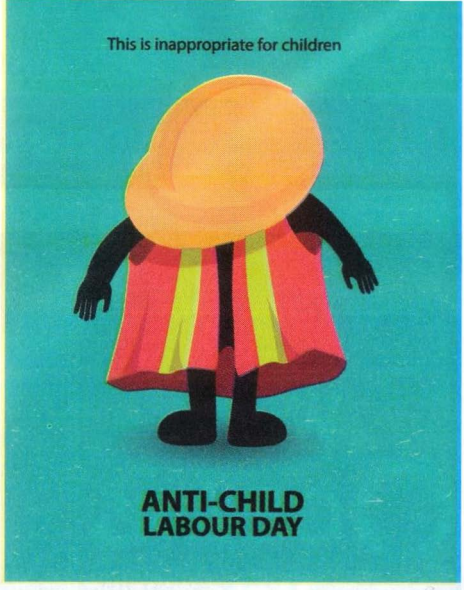


Why should we observe the World Oceans Day?

Have you ever been to a beach? The roaring of the waves, the breeze that brushes past our hair, the white foam that encircles our feet and the bewitching sky, along with all the stories that we have read and heard about seafarers and adventurers, will give us a delightful experience at a beach. The deep and vast ocean is a counterpart of the land and a world in itself. There are thousands of species of living beings within it. Like the land, the ocean is increasingly polluted. Therefore, the World Ocean Day, observed on June 8 has great relevance.

Oceans compose much of our planet's hydrosphere. The Pacific, Atlantic, Indian, Southern and Arctic Oceans not only contain a large variety of life, but also provide the requisite amount of oxygen that we breathe. Therefore, oceans are sometimes referred to as the lungs of our planet.

Have you heard of reports regarding sea animals dying due to oil-spills or plastic bags? Human activity is affecting the oceans adversely. The goal of observing the World Ocean Day is to inform the public about sustainable management of the world's oceans.



June 12

WORLD DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOUR

What is the significance of June 12?

Have you read *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens? Dickens wrote the novel that tells the story of an orphaned child labourer as a reaction to the unjust English law that sanctioned child labour in the 19th century. During the Victorian Era, the economy of Britain depended on children as their strength and inability to stand against injustice made them easy prey for the capitalist factory owners. Even today, the rights of children are violated and many still work in poor conditions. The World Day against Child Labour is observed on June 12 reminding us of the need to take good care of our children.

Children are the wealth of a nation as they represent the future. The world leaders adopted the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 in order to include a renewed global commitment to ending child labour. It calls for taking immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms.

The observance of the World Day against Child Labour began in 2002; and ever since, has brought together governments, employers and workers organizations, civil society, as well as millions of people from around the world to highlight the plight of child labourers.

June 14

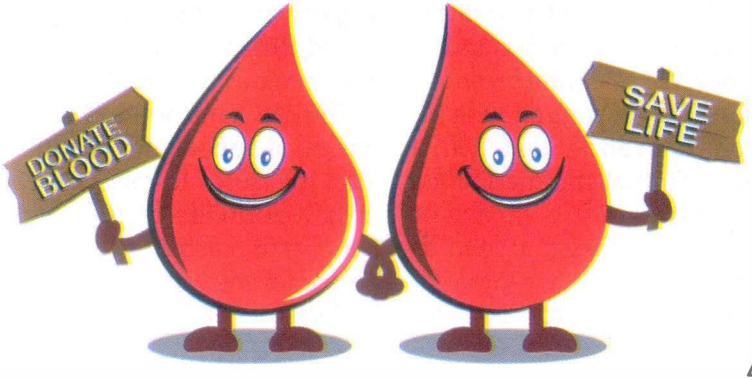
WORLD BLOOD DONOR DAY

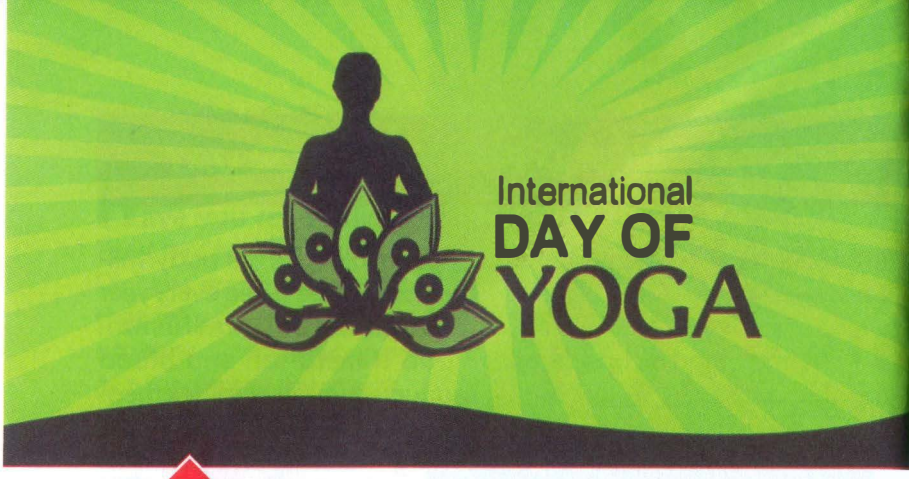
What does the world celebrate on June 14?

Donating blood is considered a noble act. Every year on 14 June, countries around the world celebrate World Blood Donor Day. The observance of the day started in 2004 and is aimed at raising awareness regarding the need for safe blood and blood products. Thousands of blood donors give their blood voluntarily every day! The day is an opportunity to thank them for their kind act and their life-saving blood.

Blood is the vital sap of our body. It needs to be replaced when an injury or an illness causes loss of blood in our body. Millions of lives are saved every year through blood transfusion. Blood transfusion and blood products support complex medical and surgical procedures too. During maternal and perinatal care, blood products are vital in their life-saving role.

Blood donation becomes effective only when there are regular donations by voluntary unpaid blood donors. One of the goals of World Blood Donor Day is to encourage people across the globe to volunteer for blood donation. World Health Organization aims to obtain the required blood for all countries by the year 2020.





June 21

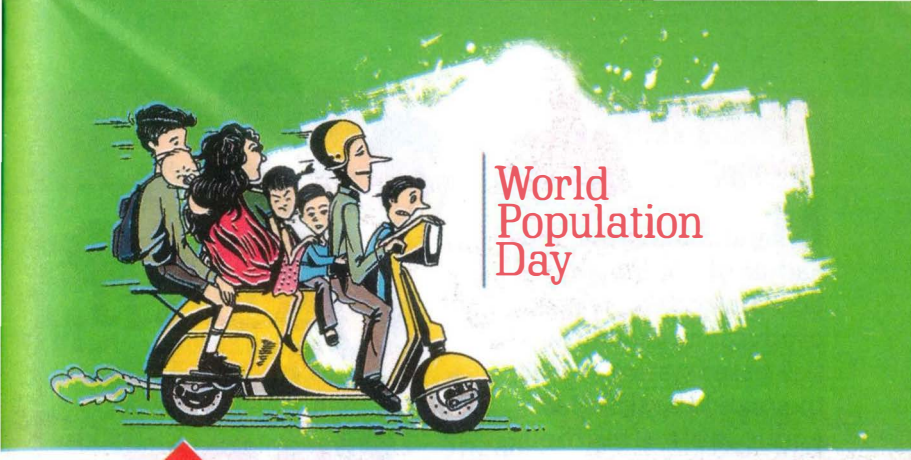
INTERNATIONAL DAY OF YOGA

Is there a day for Yoga?

We are all concerned about the well-being of our body and mind. Medical science testifies that many of our diseases are due to the disharmony between body and mind. There are many socio-cultural and religious practices across the globe that target the holistic health of an individual. Yoga is one such popular practice. We celebrate the International Day of Yoga on June 21.

Yoga is an ancient art. With a strong spiritual and meditative core, yoga offers a variety of physical exercises that lead to both physical and psychological well-being. The word 'Yoga' derives from the Sanskrit root 'yuj', which means 'to join' or 'to unite', thus signifying the union of body and consciousness. This physical, mental and spiritual practice originated in India thousands of years ago. However, Yoga became popular all over the world only in the 20th century. Today, people practice yoga in various forms around the world irrespective of cultural and religious boundaries.

The UN has recognized Yoga's universal appeal and has initiated measures to raise awareness worldwide of the many benefits of practising Yoga. The theme for the 2018 celebration is 'Yoga for Peace'.



World Population Day

July 11

WORLD POPULATION DAY

What is the relevance of holding a World Population Day?

Do you know the number of human beings in the world now? It comes to around 7.7 billion in total!

In 1989, the governing council of the United Nations Development Programme established the World Population Day as July 11 in order to focus attention on the urgency and importance of population issues.

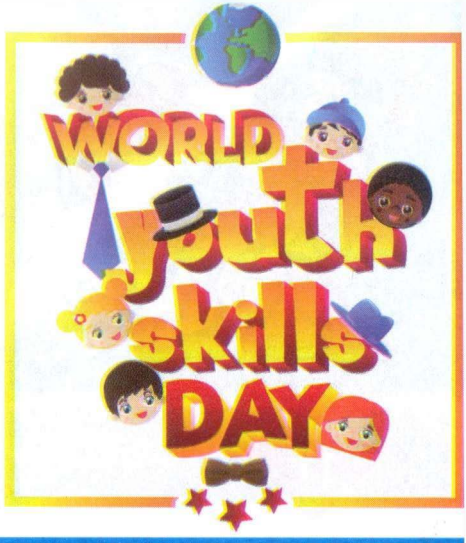
July 11 was formerly observed as the Day of 'Five Billion' and it had generated considerable interest among people across the world then. Population explosion is a reality. According to statistics, the world population increases by 100 million every 14 months. The explosion in population can result in a range of evils such as poverty, unemployment and corruption.

The World Population Day attempts to raise awareness about the implications of rising world population. The theme of the celebrations last year was 'Family Planning is a Human Right'.

The 50th anniversary of affirming family planning as a human right in the 1968 International Conference on Human Rights was celebrated. The celebration included awareness campaigns regarding the right of women and girls.

Why should young people have skill-based training?

Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Indian nation, advocated the need of educating children in a skill-based system, so that they would be skilled and employable after their education. Education should not only aim at moulding a good human



July 15

WORLD YOUTH SKILLS DAY

being, but also ensure a decent means of living and the ability to lead an honourable life in the world. On July 15, the World Youth Skills Day, the UN envisages a world where the young people are self-reliant and responsible for themselves.

According to a recent study, the youth are almost three times more likely to be unemployed than adults. They are continuously exposed to lower quality of jobs, greater labour market inequalities and longer and more insecure school-to-work transitions. In the case of women, there is a higher probability of their being unemployed than men. In addition, women, in general, are underpaid and forced to undertake part-time jobs or work under temporary contracts. In this regard, the UN considers that education and training are key determinants of success in the labour market.

The World Youth Skill Day is an opportunity to raise awareness on the importance of empowering the youth and investing in youth skills development.

July 30

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FRIENDSHIP

When is the World Friendship Day?

Many would turn to a dear friend in times of a dilemma or a crisis. A friend might be able to understand certain problems better than a parent or an older sibling. Friendship is said to have the ability to increase happiness and diminish misery by doubling our joy and cutting down our grief. Hence, a day dedicated to friendship on July 30, the International Day of Friendship, has so much relevance today.

The world offers us both happiness and sorrow. There are many challenges, crises and forces of division in the world such as poverty, violence and human right abuses in the world. There are many others that undermine peace, security, development and social harmony among the world's peoples. The anxiety and depression that they have on young minds is beyond imagination. To confront these crises and as an answer to them, a shared spirit of human solidarity, which is otherwise known as friendship, must be promoted among men and women.

Man learns to trust and love through friendship. These qualities will eventually transform the world to a better place to live.

August 12

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY

When is the International Youth Day celebrated?

The wealth of a nation is its youth, people say. A nation with a considerable number of young people needs only to direct them in the right path; they will subsequently lead the nation to glory. Young minds are full of fresh thoughts and novel ideas. Therefore, the International Youth Day, falling on August 12, is an occasion to celebrate the young, who are humanity's future.

Statistics suggest that the world has the largest number of young people currently, around 1.8 billion, between the age of 10 and 24. Although it is a matter of great promise, the fact is that one in 10 young children live in conflict zones and 24 million of them do not get any education. The youth in our societies are increasingly isolated due to political instability, labour market challenges and limited space for political and civic participation.

The International Youth Day aims to provide them safe spaces where they can come together and engage in activities related to their diverse needs and interests. The youth should be encouraged to participate in decision-making processes and freely express themselves.

Governments should provide spaces for accommodating the needs of diverse youth.

Is there a day to celebrate humanity?

Man being a social creature is neighbour to another man. What makes him different from the other animals is not only his superior intelligence, but also his quality of being humane and altruistic.

Every day, millions of men and women help others in need without expecting anything in return. The World Humanitarian Day is celebrated every year to pay tribute to aid workers who risk their lives in humanitarian service, and to rally support for people affected by crises around the world. The day is observed on August 19.

Sadly, the world is not a peaceful place any more. Incessant conflicts and wars have torn our world apart. Millions of civilians are affected by armed conflicts every day. Children have turned to militancy to fight with guns and other deadly weapons for causes they do not know.

Humanitarian workers attempt to treat their wounds and illnesses and bring them relief. The World Humanitarian Day is a reminder to the world that humans need to be more humane and brings an assurance that humanity and compassion have not left the human heart yet.

August 19

WORLD HUMANITARIAN DAY

August 29

INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST NUCLEAR TESTS

Why should we resist the proliferation of nuclear weapons?

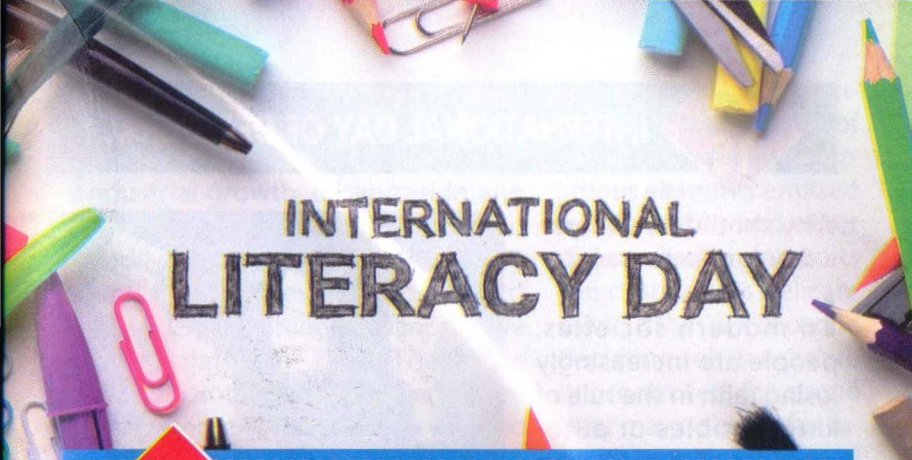
We all are aware of the dreadful destruction that Hiroshima and Nagasaki underwent towards the end of World War II. The casualties and losses were not limited to the immediate effects of the bomb; the radiation still haunts the cities as deformed babies are born even now.

However, nations have not stopped testing nuclear weapons. It is said that the nuclear weapons possessed by various nations have the firepower to destroy our planet five times over.

The International Day against Nuclear Tests serves as a warning against the danger of deadly nuclear arm race and further testing of nuclear weapons.

Nearly 2,000 tests have been conducted the world over since the first nuclear weapon test on 1945 July 16. Various international bodies have spared no effort to put an end to all forms of nuclear testing. The United Nations proposed a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, which did not materialize.

The International Day against Nuclear Tests, calls for increasing awareness about the effects of nuclear tests, to achieve the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.



September 8

INTERNATIONAL LITERACY DAY

When do we celebrate the International Literacy Day?

The ability to read and write is one of the chief achievements of Man that led to the development and enhancement of civilization. It is an important skill for an individual's participation in socio-political and cultural discourse. It helps develop one's awareness of one's rights, civil responsibilities and knowledge of the world. The UN has dedicated a day to celebrating literacy known as the International Literacy Day, which falls on September 8.

Universal access to quality education and learning opportunities for people is part of the agenda of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Despite the progress people across the world have made, there still persist literacy challenges in certain parts of the world.

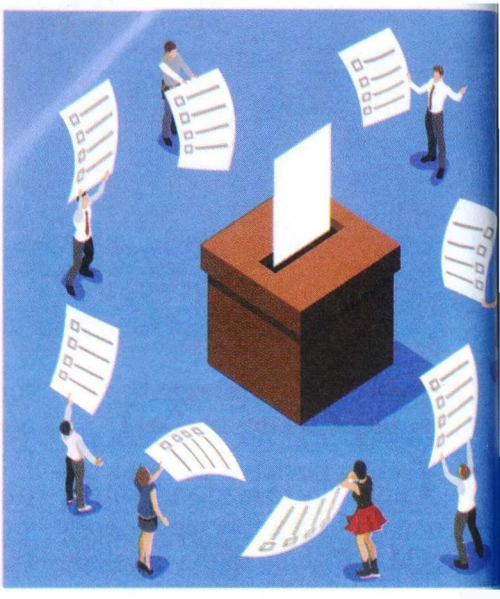
Literacy has become an important requirement for livelihood, especially in the context of advanced employment schemes, The UN provides opportunities to achieve literacy for all the young people and the adults who lack these skills.

International Literacy Day focuses on the competencies required for employment, careers, and livelihoods along with skills.

September 15

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DEMOCRACY

Why should we observe a day for democracy?



In modern societies, people are increasingly losing faith in the rule of kings, nobles or autocrats. In an egalitarian and just society, people are their own rulers; and therefore, democracy is the rule of the people. Do you know Abraham Lincoln's famous definition of democracy? The International Day of Democracy envisages governments of the people, by the people and for the people. This day falls on September 15.

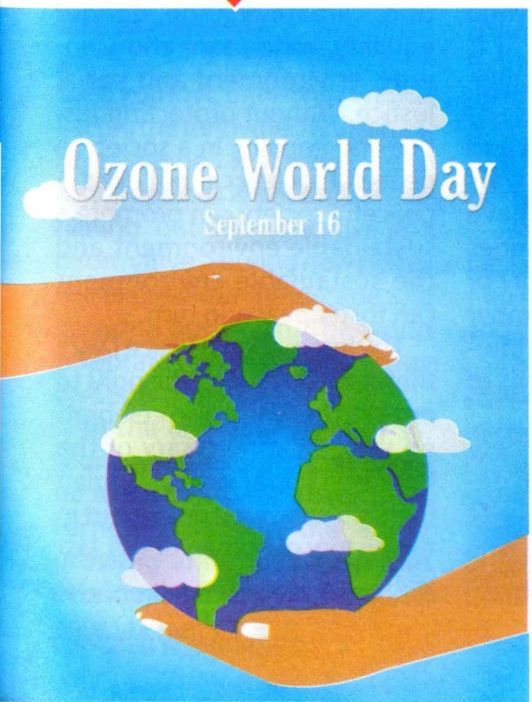
The purpose of celebrating such a day is to look for ways to encourage democracy and seek answers to the challenges it faces. Democracy must make nations ready to tackle economic and political inequalities, bring the young and the marginalized into the political system and make nations more innovative and responsive to emerging challenges such as migration and climate change. The rulers and governments should be made aware of the values of freedom, and respect for human rights as essential elements of democracy.

The International Day of Democracy tells the world that the relevance and significance of democracy can be upheld only through the protection and effective realization of human rights.

Why is it imperative to observe a day for the ozone layer?

Industrial growth, urbanization and ultimately man's greed have slowly but steadily destroyed nature. Increasing number of factories, automobiles and other carbon emitting appliances have only escalated the crisis. The ozone layer that protects our earth from harmful rays from the space has developed holes, which can have disastrous effects on life on the planet.

The ozone layer is nothing but a fragile screen of gases. Harmful and hazardous elements emitted from factories and other carbon-discharging units can destroy this delicate shield. If the uses of ozone depleting substances are not controlled, the ozone layer may not exist for future generations. The UN has advocated a gradual phaseout of these substances and this can contribute significantly to global efforts to address climate change.



September 16

OZONE WORLD DAY

The Montreal Protocol, proposed in 1987, was aimed at a global agreement that can protect the ozone layer by systematically ending the production and consumption of ozone-depleting substances.

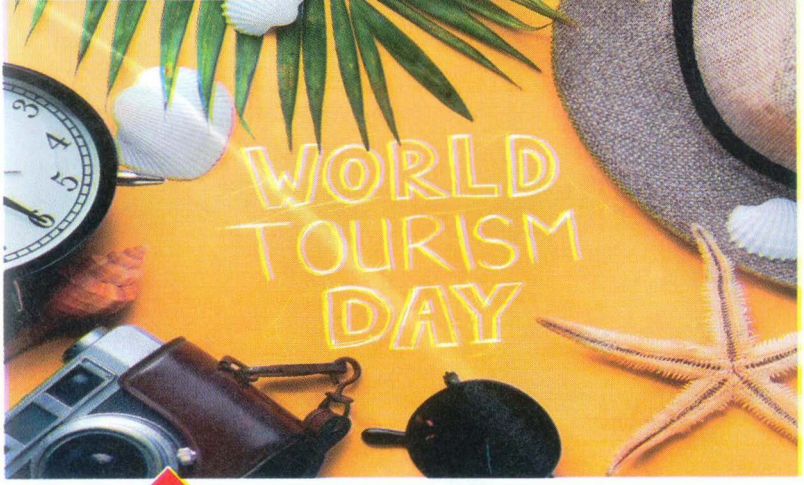
The International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer is observed on September 16.

What vital ideal is celebrated on September 21?

Do you know what our world is in dire need of, today? It is peace. Our world has been splintered into factions because of race, caste, creed, ethnicity and nationality. Intermittent wars and incessant civil strife have torn nations and communities apart. The International Day of Peace, observed on September 21, envisages a world community built on the foundations of lasting peace.

The basis of a peaceful society is the economic and social development for all people whose rights are protected. This is why the UN member states adopted in 2015 the 17 Sustainable Development Goals that cover a broad range of issues, including poverty, hunger, health, education, climate change, gender equality, water, sanitation, energy, environment and social justice. Without protecting justice and equality in a society, a peaceful society cannot exist. A peaceful society can promote a sustainable environment and the sustainable environment can foster peace, in turn.

The International Peace Day's theme for 2018 was 'the right to peace'. The world also celebrated the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a milestone document in the history of human rights, last year.



September 27

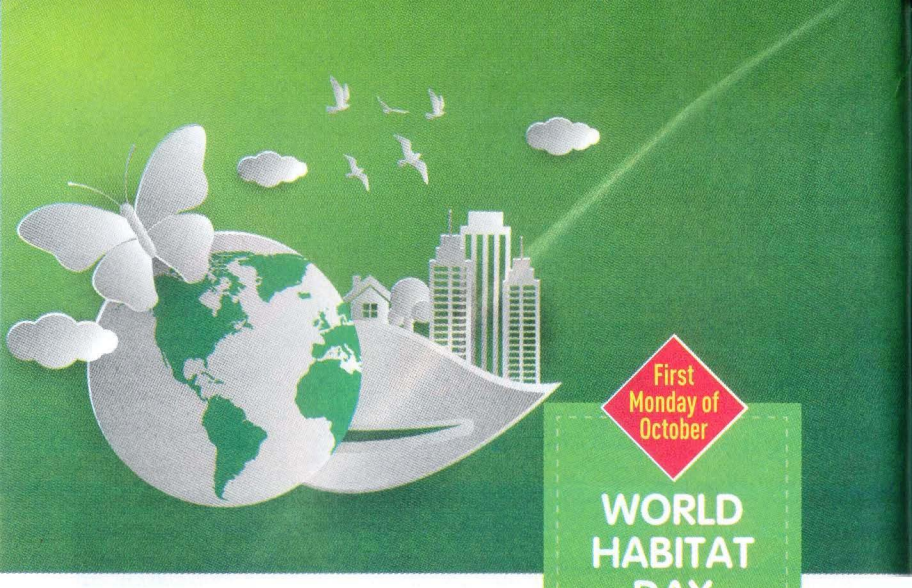
WORLD TOURISM DAY

When is the World Tourism Day celebrated?

Do you love travelling? Francis Bacon, the renowned English essayist, opined that travelling to distant places is not only entertaining, but also educative and reformative. Touring new places will expand our mindscape and broaden our vision. The world celebrates World Tourism Day on September 27.

In the last sixty years or so, tourism has experienced exponential growth world over. It has turned into one of the fastest growing and most important economic activities in the world, benefiting destinations and communities worldwide. The UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) predicts that this sector will continue its growth at an average of 3 per cent annually until 2030. This growth is expected despite the many challenges the growth of tourism faces, such as the global economic crisis, natural disasters and pandemic diseases.

There are so many beautiful, strange and astonishing places in the world. There are diverse cultures, communities and life styles. Travelling and visiting these places will turn men richer in experiences and wiser in relationships.



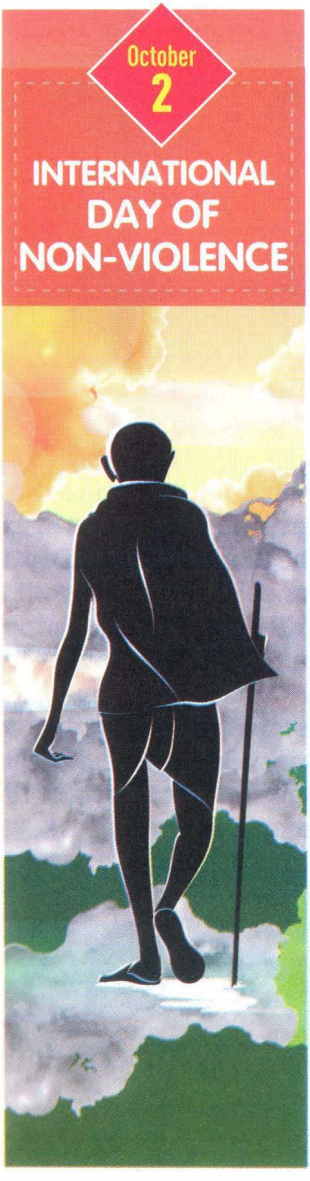
Why is the World Habitat Day observed?

After food and clothing, what Man needs most is shelter. A home is a dream for many. Some people save every penny they earn to build a home. Home is the symbol of safety, comfort and support. The United Nations has designated the first Monday of October of every year as World Habitat Day to meditate on the state of our homes, towns and cities. It is also an opportunity to reflect on the basic right of all people for adequate shelter.

The theme of the World Habitat Day of 2018 was regarding Municipal Solid Waste Management. One of the chief concerns of town dwellers is how to dispose garbage. There was a concerted effort to raise awareness regarding promoting innovative solutions to municipal solid waste management, facilitating policy dialogues and forming partnerships among communities for mobilizing resources to address the municipal solid waste challenges.

The World Habitat Day reminds us that we all have the power and the responsibility to shape the future of our homes, cities and towns.

Why should we observe the International Day of Non-Violence?



There is hardly anyone who has not heard of Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhiji, with his toothless smile, captivated the world with a distinct political philosophy: Non-Violence. Gandhi was instrumental in guiding India to political freedom in 1947. Following Gandhi's model, many leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr. have adopted non-violence as their philosophy. On October 2, the day Gandhi was born, the world observes the International Day of Non-Violence.

Many nations have ceased to believe in peaceful negotiations to settle international and civil disputes. The army and the police have turned to be instruments of violence in many places. Gandhi himself did not believe in the necessity of an army at all. The UN wants to reaffirm the universal relevance of the principle of non-violence through the observance of the day. According to the UN General Assembly resolution, the day is an occasion to disseminate the message of non-violence through public awareness.

The International Day of Non-Violence is an opportunity to remember the words of the great man: "Non-violence is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of Man".

October 5

WORLD TEACHERS' DAY

When do we observe the World Teachers' Day?

In Indian tradition, the teacher is considered equal to God. Along with mother and father, the teacher plays an important role in the development of the child. World over, teachers are given special importance for their contribution to the well-being and edification of society. The World Teachers' Day is held annually on October 5.

Teachers play an important part in students' education, recruitment, employment, and teaching and learning conditions. One of the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN recognizes teachers as key to the achievement of the Education 2030 agenda and recommends ways to counter challenges to ideal teacher-student relationship. The right to education presupposes the right to qualified teachers. Therefore, it is important for nations to raise the standards of teachers by providing them with programmes that will improve their quality.

The world needs more teachers today. Statistics suggest that around 69 million teachers have to be recruited to reach the 2030 education goal of universal primary and secondary education. The World Teachers' Day also serves as an invitation to young men and women to choose the noble profession of teaching.

October 11

DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD

Should there be a day for girl children?

The International Day of the Girl Child falls on October 11, highlighting the needs and challenges girls face today. There are many societies where the girl child is regarded inauspicious and unwelcome. In many parts of India, the girl child is considered a burden due to the evil practice of dowry.

The day reminds us that between boys and girls there is nothing that makes one superior to the other. An educated and skilled girl is as equipped and qualified as an educated and skilled boy. Therefore, women should be provided all opportunities that man get. The UN reports that millions of girls are either denied jobs or are employed in jobs that earn them low or no pay. Many of them face bias, abuse and exploitation at work. Nations should be able to expand existing learning opportunities for girls, chart new pathways for them and rethink how to prepare them for a successful transition into the world of work.

The UN has marked the beginning of a year-long programme to draw attention to the most pressing needs and opportunities for girls to attain skills for employability under the theme, 'With her: A Skilled Girl-force'.

Why should we observe a day for food?

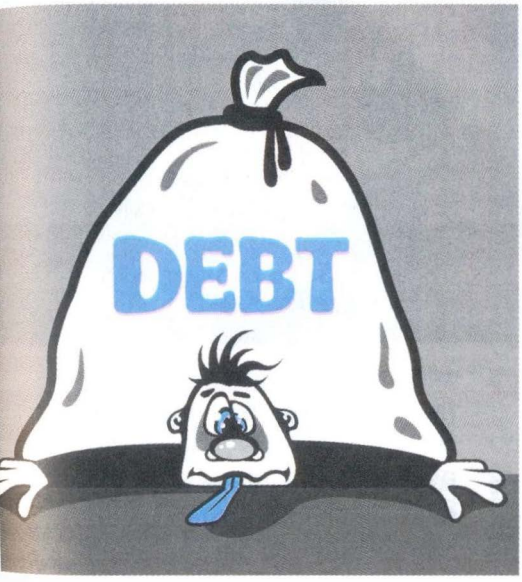
The most essential element to being healthy and fit is a nutritious diet. While we have our favourite snack or dessert, we have our staple food that we eat routinely and that keeps us healthy. On October 16, when the world observes the World Food Day, we should not only thank the thousand hands that prepare our food and bring it to our table, but also bear in mind the thousands of faceless people who go hungry without even a day's meal.

One of the greatest tasks the world faces today is addressing the challenge of feeding a rapidly growing population. Nations have to invest in sustainable food systems and rural development. They have their task cut out in protecting the global climate and tackling some of the root causes of migration and displacement. The UN is resolved to end hunger world over and evolve a climate-compatible agriculture and food systems that deliver without harming nature.

World Food Day reminds each of us of our responsibility to keep our neighbours free of hunger. While the likelihood of a child dying before age five has been nearly cut in half, with about 17,000 children saved every day over the past 20 years, there are still millions, who need our intervention to keep the fire in their body burning.

October 17

DAY FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY



When do we observe the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty?

One of the most persistent evils that world faces today is poverty. In 2012, there were about 1.2 billion poor people in the world, according to statistics. Although people say that poverty is a relative notion, it is generally understood as the scarcity of a certain amount of material possession or money to live a respectable life. On October 17, we observe the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

We often mistake poverty to be a solely an economic problem. However, the phenomenon has many dimensions that include lack of both income and the basic capabilities to live in dignity. It is a matter of great shame that so many people still continue to live in abject poverty while certain parts of the world enjoy unprecedented levels of economic development, technological means and financial resources.

It is true that poverty often coincides with human rights violations. If we all have wide-open eyes, an empathetic heart and love for humanity, we all can contribute in our own little way in eradicating poverty from the face of the Earth.

Is there a day to celebrate the United Nations?

We all know that most of the international days we have dealt with so far are declared by the United Nations, an intergovernmental organization. Therefore, it is only befitting that we have a day to celebrate the UN itself, on October 24.

The UN Day is celebrated on the anniversary of its entry into force in 1945 by adopting the UN Charter. The founding document was ratified by the majority of its signatories, including the five permanent members of the Security Council. The five permanent members were France, the Republic of China, the Soviet Union, the UK and the US. The purpose of founding such an international body was to maintain international peace and security and become a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations.

The UN has declared peacekeeping, security among nations, human rights, economic development and humanitarian assistance as its objectives.

The UN has been of great help to the nations and communities in the world. As an organization that has considerable influence over nations, there is much more the organization can offer today than ever before.

November 14

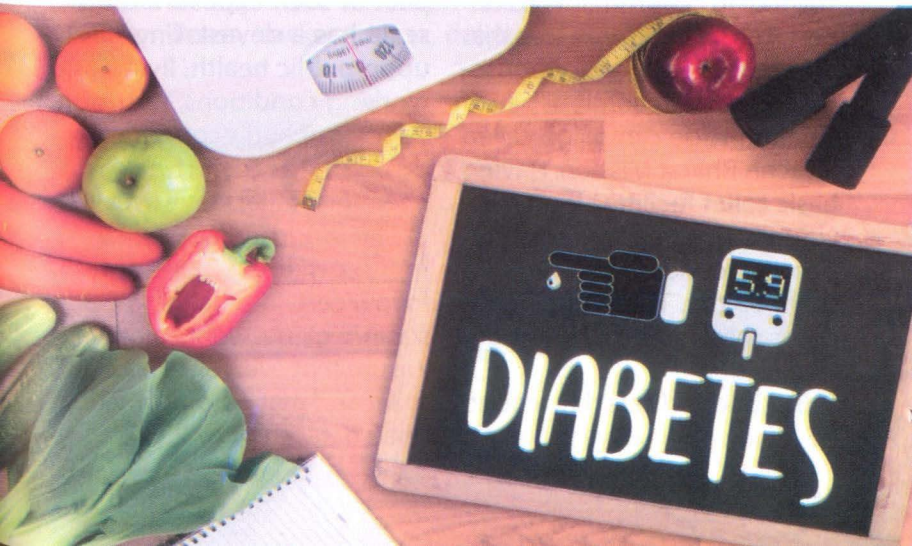
WORLD DIABETES DAY

What is the relevance of the World Diabetes Day?

November 14 is the World Diabetes Day. A condition that impairs the human body's ability to process blood sugar, diabetes occurs because our body is unable to produce enough insulin to meet its needs.

The prevalence of diabetes is increasing so rapidly across the globe. It is estimated that around 422 million people have been living with diabetes in 2016. The number was only 108 million in 1980. The disease comes with many associated risk factors, such as obesity. Diabetes is considered a major cause of blindness, kidney failure, heart attack, strokes and lower limb amputation. Doctors say that a healthy diet, physical activity and avoiding tobacco use can prevent or delay the onset of diabetes. There are several drugs available today, which can cure the disease and its consequences.

The World Diabetes Day is an opportunity to encourage countries to develop national policies for the prevention, treatment and care of the disease.



World Toilet Day

Why should we observe the World Toilet Day?

One of the inconveniences many people in countries like India face is the lack of toilets. The Indian government has undertaken an important step that ensures toilets in every household across the country as part of a nation-wide campaign called Swachh Bharat Mission. Having basic toilet facilities is an individual's right as hygienic and clean surroundings will help him stay healthy. The World Toilet Day is celebrated on November 19.

Statistics indicate that around 4.5 billion people live without a safe toilet and 892 million people still practice open defecation. Human waste can spread dangerous diseases. Defecating in the open, in fact, can expose people to various diseases that can threaten their life. The impact of such exposure on this scale has a devastating effect upon public health, living and working conditions, nutrition, education and economic productivity across the world. Therefore, toilets save lives.

The World Toilet Day is a reminder that everyone should follow certain practices of personal hygiene. We are aiming to ensure that everyone has a safe toilet and that no-one practices open defecation by 2030.

November 20

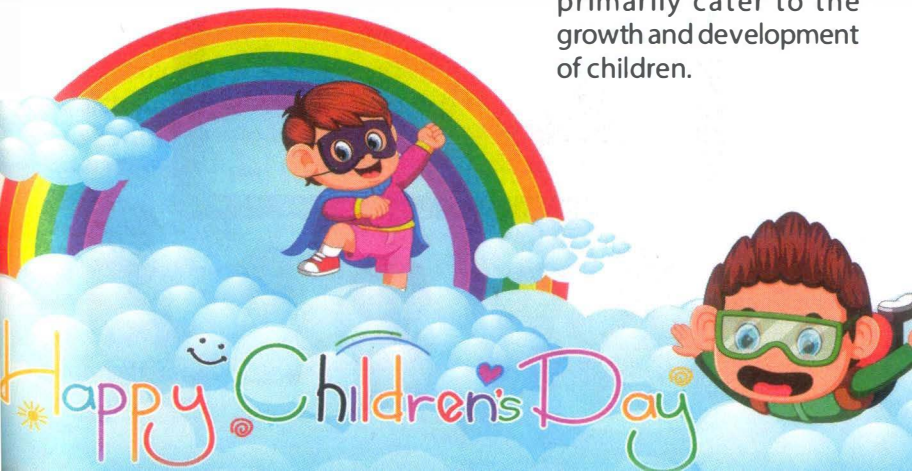
UNIVERSAL CHILDREN'S DAY

When is the Universal Children's Day celebrated?

The hopes and dreams for a new and better world lie with children; and therefore, they are the future of humanity. Established in 1954 by the United Nations, the Universal Children's Day is celebrated on November 20th each year to promote international togetherness, awareness among children worldwide, and improving children's welfare.

One of the most celebrated international document for the rights of children is the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. It advocates giving children the means necessary for their normal material and spiritual development. Hunger, illness, backwardness, delinquency and abandonment of children should be eliminated. The document says that children must be the first to receive relief in times of distress. There should be provisions to protect children against every form of exploitation. The Declaration was adopted in 1924 and still remains the chief pillar of support for the rights of children.

The Universal Children's Day reminds us that our education systems, social structures and institutions should primarily cater to the growth and development of children.



November 21

WORLD TELEVISION DAY

Should we observe a day for television?

There is hardly any home without a television. Television has become such an integral part of our life as it takes care of many of the chief aspects of our life such as entertainment, information and health. Before the advent of the Internet, people depended heavily on television for news, education and entertainment. On November 21, the World Television Day, we recognize and acknowledge the importance of television in our life.

Television plays an important role in the building of a society. Much of an individual's leisure time is spent in front of TV. It provides the viewer with various programmes ranging from news presentations, discussion platforms, interviews, films and serial shows to school and college lessons. Therefore, it has the unique ability to fashion people's views and opinions. However, television, popularly known as the 'idiot box', has its disadvantages too.

The World Television Day, therefore, should make us more responsible and committed towards our society.

December 5

WORLD SOIL DAY

What is the relevance of the World Soil Day?

Have you ever thought what a wonder the soil is? The upper layer of the earth, soil is a mixture of organic and inorganic matter, which sustains and fosters all life on Earth. The whole of plant life exists on the soil as they take water and necessary nutrients from it. Therefore, all animals and other organisms have no existence without soil. We observe the World Soil Day on December 5.

Do you know that soil is a finite natural resource? It is non-renewable too. Therefore, if it is polluted beyond its natural redeeming ability, soil cannot be reclaimed. It is a fact that there is a steady worldwide increase in the degradation of soil resources due to inappropriate management practices and population pressure. Therefore, the observance of the World Soil Day aims to raise awareness regarding the importance of soil quality for food security, healthy ecosystems and human well-being.

What we can do to contribute to the well-being of our planet is by not throwing plastic, non-degradable and toxic materials on the soil, thus polluting it.

December 10

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

When is Human Rights Day celebrated?

Millions of people are living all over the world devoid of basic amenities, dignity and human rights. Human Rights are the rights that every individual has by virtue of being a human being, irrespective of their gender, caste, creed, religion, nation, location or economic status. On December 10, the world observes the Human Rights Day.

December 10 is the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a historic document, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at its third session on 10 December 1948 in Paris, France. It is a milestone document that proclaimed the inalienable rights, which everyone is inherently entitled to as a human being, regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Being the sacred scripture of justice and fairness, this document is the most translated document in the world, available in more than 500 languages.

The Human Rights Day reminds us of the significance of equal dignity and worth of every person. We, as responsible individuals, have to make a promise to ourselves to uphold the rights that protect us all and thereby promote the kinship of all human beings.

Are mountains essential for our existence?

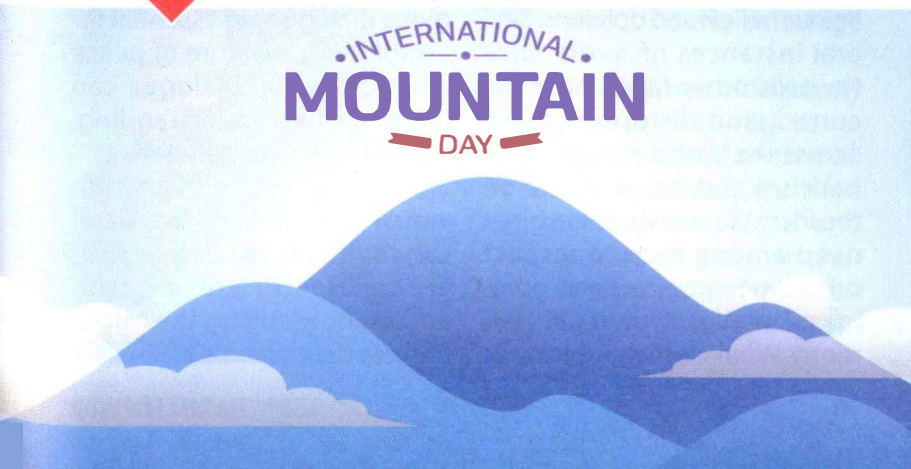
Have you been to the top of a mountain? The cool breeze, the fresh air, the beautiful sky and, above all, the sight from above give us an unforgettable experience from high up on the mountain. Mountains are not just beautiful places to visit. They contribute significantly to ecosystems and biosphere. International Mountain Day is celebrated on December 11.

Statistics say that about one billion people live in mountainous areas. Almost half the human population depends on mountains for water, food and clean energy. However, climate change, land degradation, over exploitation and natural disasters, with potentially far-reaching and devastating consequences, are threatening not only the mountains themselves, but also mountain communities, and the rest of the world. Global warming is melting mountain glaciers at an unprecedented rate. This affects freshwater supplies downstream for millions of people.

International Mountain Day should raise awareness regarding the importance of mountains in Man's life. It is also an opportunity to remind governments to be pro-active, and protect mountains.

December 11

INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN DAY



First Week of February

THE WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK

Why does the world celebrate the World Interfaith Harmony Week in February?

Do you know there are roughly 4,200 religions in the world? This means that there is so much diversity in terms of people's religious beliefs and opinions. Several instances of intolerance towards other faiths have occurred, and disrupted peace across the world. Religious fanaticism and insularity are on the increase and there is a great need among men to respect others' perspectives and opinions. The World Interfaith Harmony Week, which advocates understanding and tolerance of others' faith, is celebrated in the first week of February.

Most of the times, disrespect and intolerance start from ignorance. The UN General Assembly points out that mutual understanding and inter-religious dialogue are essential for establishing a culture of peace among people. Dialogue can foster mutual understanding, harmony and cooperation.

Religion is more of an individual's personal affair. We all can contribute to peace in society by respecting others' faith and acknowledging their right to have their opinions.

March 21 to 27

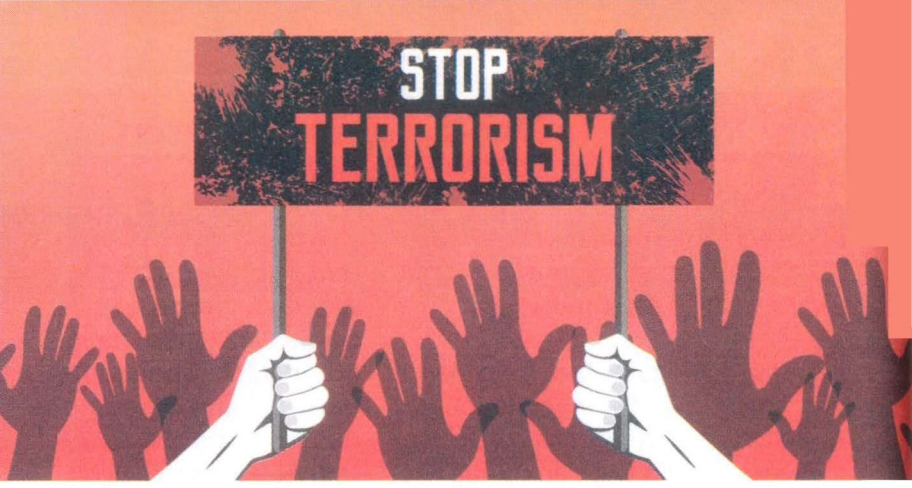
WEEK OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE STRUGGLING AGAINST RACISM

Why should we observe the Week of Solidarity with struggle against racism and racial discrimination?

Racism segregates Man from Man. It is an absurd belief in the superiority of some people over others because of their racial origin and skin colour. Racism was rampant in the past and nations are trying their best to eradicate this evil practice today. From March 21 to 27, the UN observes the Week of Solidarity with the People Struggling against Racism and Racial Discrimination. The week starts with the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on March 21.

While racism is a system of power that provides privilege to the dominant white racial group while oppressing darker-skinned people, racial discrimination is the individual unfair treatment of a person or group of people on the basis of race. State interventions and laws can control racial discrimination, to a certain extent. However, racism can be wiped out only through awareness and understanding. There should be concerted effort from leaders of the nations to ordinary citizens, in order to bridge the gap.

The Week of Solidarity is an opportunity to remind each of us that all are equal and we have no right to hold any prejudice against anyone because of their colour, birth, race and ethnicity.



May 25 to 31

INTERNATIONAL WEEK OF SOLIDARITY

What is the relevance of the Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories?

When India gained independence in 1947, the nation became a sovereign state that is ruled by its own people. However, many territories in other parts of world are still under the rule of colonial countries. Therefore, the International Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories observed between May 25 and 31, has great relevance.

Colonialism was a tragic event, which saw many countries and territories being invaded or systematically subjugated and plundered of their wealth. In 1946, the UN had prepared a list of territories that were not self-governing. Most of these territories freed themselves through the process of decolonization. However, some of them had remained dependent. The UN is urging the administering countries to take effective measures to safeguard and guarantee the inalienable rights of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories to their natural resources, including land. It is important that these

territories be given the power to maintain control over the future development of those resources. The UN is also making requests to take all necessary steps to protect the property rights of the peoples of those territories.

The Week of Solidarity is aimed at enabling the people of these territories to stand up for their own rights and fight against all oppressing powers.

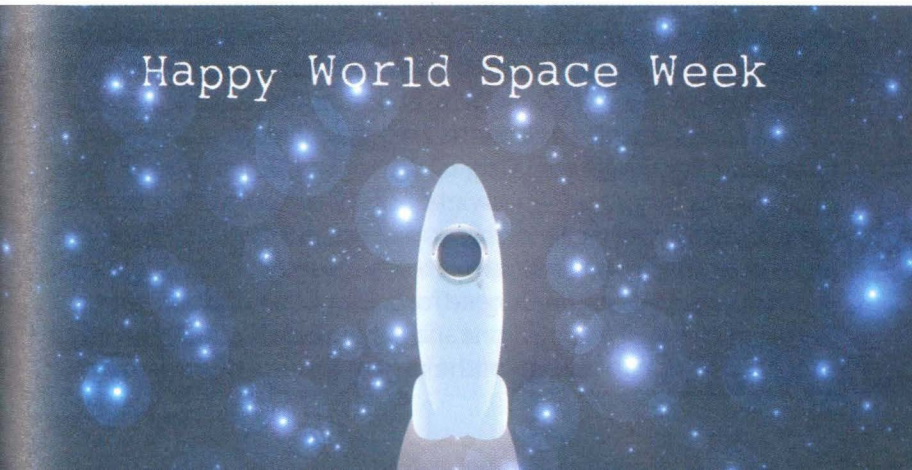
touching the moon one day. The dream materialized only quite recently when the Soviet Union and the US competed to outstrip each other in conquering Space and beyond. When others pitched in and ventured into more space explorations, we started learning more about our planet, the solar system, the galaxy, the vast universe and Man's position in the universe. The

October 4 to 10 — THE WORLD SPACE WEEK

What is the significance of Space in Man's life?

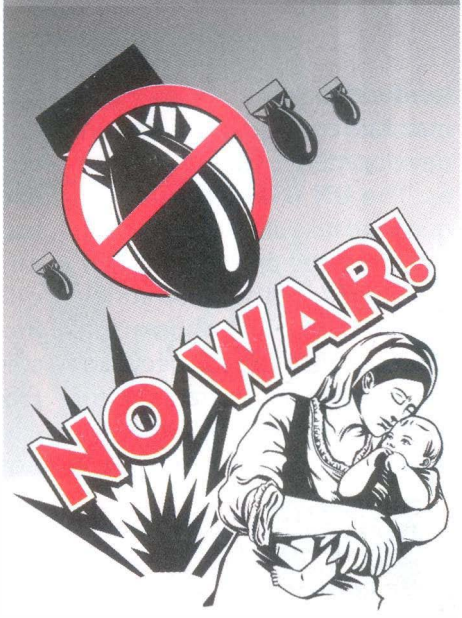
Lying on his back and gazing at the stars after a hard day's labour, ancient Man may have dreamt of flying past the sky, and World Space Week from October 4 to 10 celebrates the role of Space in bringing the world closer together.

The World Space Week starts on the anniversary of the launching of Sputnik I, the first artificial



satellite, on October 4, 1957. The week presents the biggest Space event in the world. The purpose of the celebrations is to inspire students to turn to Space research and educate the public about Space activities.

Humanity has reached beyond the sky. Every step humans take now should not only advance them in knowledge, but also bring them closer to each other.



October 24 to 30 THE DISARMAMENT WEEK

What is the relevance of the Disarmament Week?

The world is witnessing an arms race among nations today. Governments are spending large amounts from the exchequer to buy newer and better weaponry.

Accumulation of weapons is often based on the misconception that conflicts can be resolved by showing off one's weaponry. However, war seldom brings peace. Disarmament Week, observed from October 24 to 30, is an attempt to raise awareness regarding the importance of systematic reduction of arms and lead world powers to better sense.

The annual observance of the week starts on the anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. Worldwide awareness is invited to the danger of the arms race during this week. It is also an opportunity to propagate the need for ending accumulation of weapons and increase public understanding of the urgent tasks of disarmament.

November 6 to 12

INTERNATIONAL WEEK OF SCIENCE AND PEACE

Why is the International Week of Science and Peace celebrated?

Does science contribute to world peace? Science has often been criticized for inventing devices that wreaked havoc in the world. From bombs and guns to nuclear weapons of mass destruction, some scientific inventions have caused the death of millions of people.

Today, the scientific community is striving hard to direct scientific pursuits for the peace and prosperity of the world. Therefore, the International Week of Science and Peace, celebrated from November 6 to 12, poses some very relevant questions.

Science should be more responsible today. Scientists should be able to stand by the high moral standards in order that science may fuel constructive and proactive developments in society. Education across the globe should be directed at a scientific way of thinking rather than mere learning pure sciences. The International Week of Science encourages greater academic exchanges of universal importance while also generating greater awareness of the relationship of science and peace among the public.

January 12

NATIONAL YOUTH DAY

When is the National Youth Day of India?

The youth are the future of any nation. Investing wisely in the youth in terms of education will guarantee a prosperous nation. The National Youth Day on January 12 falls on the birthday of Swami Vivekananda, a great Indian monk and philosopher.

Swami Vivekananda, born in 1863, was a prodigy. The foremost disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, the 19th century Indian saint, he was a spokesperson for the Vedanta philosophy of India. He placed India on the world map with his historical speech at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago. The monk represented Hinduism and India at this first World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893; and subsequently, he was invited to speak all over America and Europe.

He was also a key figure in the introduction of yoga to the western world. The National Youth Day is celebrated to remind each young mind of India to be a courageous and responsible citizen.

INDIAN ARMY DAY

Why should we celebrate the Indian Army Day?

The army not only guards the borders of our nation, but also takes part in several other activities aimed at serving the people.

Soldiers make appropriate interventions at the times of natural disasters and calamities with wide impact, and help the victims by bringing them food and other necessary amenities. They also help governments in conducting larger events smoothly. The Indian Army Day is observed on January 15, the anniversary of shifting of power from the British General, Sir Francis Butcher, to the Indian General, KM Cariappa.

Indian Army is the third largest standing army in the world. Celebrated in the form of parades and other military shows in the national capital New Delhi as well as in other headquarters, the day marks a day to respect the valiant soldiers who sacrificed their lives to protect the country and its citizens.

Subhas Chandra Bose

When does the nation celebrate Netaji Jayanti?

Subhas Chandra Bose, fondly called Netaji, is one of the most prominent revolutionary leaders of the Indian freedom movement. He was born on January 23, 1887 and the same day is celebrated as Netaji Jayanti.

Although the credit for leading the national struggle against the British could be given to the non-violent movement of Gandhi, Bose's armed struggle played an important role in it too. He went to Japan in 1943 to plan an attack on the British Raj and win independence for India with Japan's help. His Indian National Army, in fact, captured Kohima from the British. However, as Japan could not intervene and help the INA in time, his top lieutenants were arrested and captured. The INA remains a symbol of our nation's determination and courage to rise up against the enemy.

While there is still uncertainty around Netaji's disappearance, his popularity and iconic status as a warrior has not diminished in any measure in India. Even today, Netaji continues to inspire thousands of young men to show their love for their nation.

What are the implications of celebrating Republic Day on January 26?

A nation becomes fully independent when it has a body of fundamental principles, known as a constitution, according to which the state is acknowledged to be governed. India became an independent republic and its constitution came into effect on January 26, 1950. Therefore, January 26 is celebrated as Indian Republic Day.

Chaired by B.R. Ambedkar, the Constituent Assembly that drafted the constitution included statesmen like Jawaharlal Nehru, C. Rajagopalachari, Rajendra Prasad, Vallabhbhai Patel and Kanaiyalal Maneklal Munshi. The Indian constitution is the longest written constitution in the world.

On Republic Day, India celebrates its constitution that declares the nation as a sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic, assuring its citizens justice, equality and liberty.

January 30

MARTYRS' DAY

When do we observe Martyrs' Day?

Thousands of men have sacrificed their lives for India's independence. Although names of many of them have faded into oblivion, their character, courage and commitment have inspired millions of Indians to work towards building India into a prosperous nation.

On January 30, the day Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated, the nation pays homage to the freedom fighters and those people who laid down their lives in the service of the nation. The day is observed as Martyrs' Day.

Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation, is recognized as one of the greatest leaders of our times. His greatest contribution to humanity is the praxis of non-violence and civil disobedience that won India its freedom. He is reputed for professing in his life spirituality and politics, two seemingly irreconcilable aspects of life.

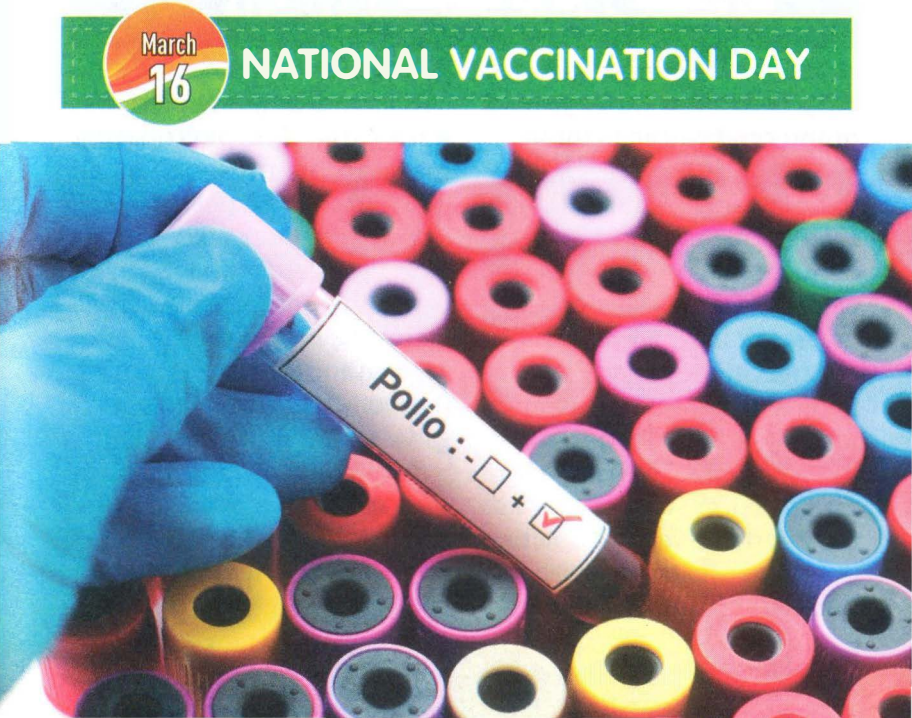
Gandhi was shot down by Nathuram Godse, another Indian, who was intolerant of Gandhi's altruistic attitudes. Martyrs' Day is a reminder to us to be ever vigilant against rising hatred and violence in society.

What is the significance of March 16?

The human body wages an unceasing war against microbes that attack it from all over. While many diseases still pose fatal threats, modern medical science has been successful in overpowering many that used to be life threatening.

Vaccines, synthetic formulae that provide immunity against diseases, have been a boon to societies. On March 16, 2014, the National Vaccination Day, India was declared polio-free by the World Health Organization.

Polio, also known as infantile paralysis, is an infectious disease that causes muscle weakness resulting in an inability to move. Aggressive vaccination campaigns and concerted efforts, however, have resulted in freeing the country of polio, smallpox and such diseases. The National Vaccination Day attempts to spread awareness regarding the importance of eradicating polio and such other deadly diseases from our planet Earth.



April 14

AMBEDKAR JAYANTI

Why is Ambedkar Jayanti a grand celebration in India?

The Indian Constitution is considered one the most comprehensive of all constitutions in the world. On April 14, India celebrates the birthday of the chief architect of the Indian Constitution. Ambedkar Jayanti is an occasion to acknowledge not only the contribution he has made to create the Constitution, but also the efforts he took in uplifting the Dalits and other marginalized castes in India.

Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was a multifaceted personality, marking his presence as an economist, jurist, politician and social reformer who fought against social discrimination towards the untouchables, while also supporting the rights of women and labour. He is known the world over as the Indian crusader for social justice.

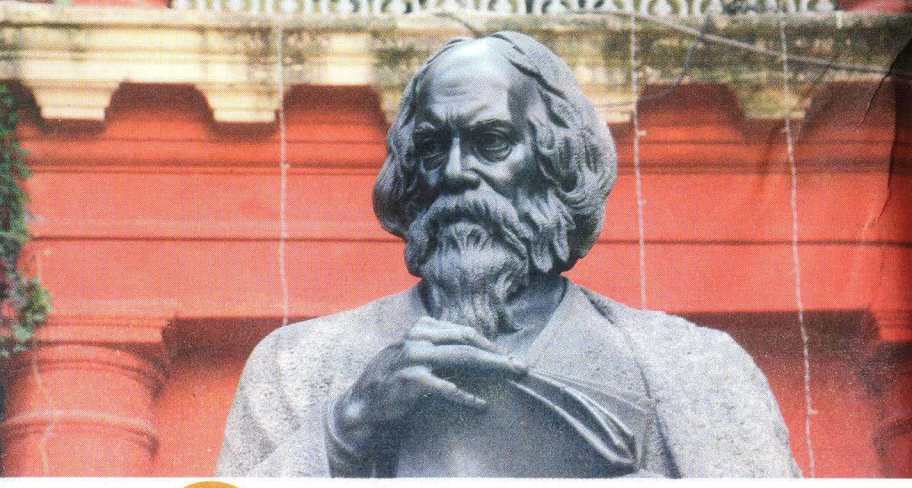
Ambedkar Jayanti inspires men and women to stand up for their rights and fight against any kind of discrimination in society.

MAY DAY

What is the significance of May Day?

In 1886, labourers in Chicago had declared a general strike starting from May 1 in order to limit the working hours to 8 hours a day. In the commotion that ensued, police fired at the workers and killed eight of them. The event created further ripples in the society as riots broke out and the police and the military killed more civilians. In 1891, the anniversary of the Chicago protests was observed as the International Workers' Day for the first time. The day is also known as May Day.

In India, the day has another significance too. In 1923, a prominent Communist leader Malayapuram Singaravelu Chettiar raised the red flag in Chennai on May 1 and inaugurated communism in India. That was also the event when May Day celebrations were introduced in our country. May Day symbolizes the strength in union and fraternity and it tells the world that labourers who build the world are to be respected and their rights, protected.



May 7

RABINDRA JAYANTI

Why should we celebrate Rabindra Jayanti?

Who won the first and only Nobel Prize for Literature from India? We all know it is none other than Rabindranath Tagore. Gitanjali, Tagore's collection of poems, was a 'work of a supreme culture' as William Butler Yeats remarked in his introduction to the work. On May 7, his birthday, the nation celebrates Rabindra Jayanti.

Tagore was a multifaceted genius. While his poetry inspired young men of India and abroad, his songs are renowned too. The genre of music that he propagated is known as Rabindra Sangeet. He is also the author of the national anthems of three countries: India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

Rabindranath Tagore is not just another poet of India; he epitomizes Indian culture, nationalism and transnationalism. Therefore, Rabindra Jayanti is an occasion to remind ourselves to uphold the ideals he represented.

How important was the Quit India Movement for Indian independence?

The nation celebrates the Quit India Day on August 8 to remem-

August 8

QUIT INDIA DAY

ber the Quit India Movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi in 1942. The movement was designed to inspire Indians to wrest freedom from the British imperialists.

The Quit India Movement, also known as the August Movement, was a Civil Disobedience Movement launched by Gandhi for independence. There were mass protests against the British following its launch.

However, the people remained non-violent. Gandhi proclaimed that any Indian who desires to be free and is ready to work towards liberty must be his/her own guide. Leaders across the country made passionate speeches urging people to rise against the British. Around 14,000 people were arrested and hundreds of people were killed in the violence.

Most Indian National Congress leaders, including Gandhi, were put in prison. The movement accelerated the transition of power and the British passage from India.

While the Quit India Day celebrations should fill us with proud memories, the day should also make us feel responsible for building the India that freedom fighters had once envisioned.

INDEPENDENCE DAY

Which day is the most important day in India's history?

August 15 is the most important day for our nation because that is when we achieved our independence from British imperialists. One of the three national holidays in the country, August 15 celebrates our commitment to sovereignty and the sacrifices of the freedom fighters.

The long years of slavery under the British rule saw India, a cultural powerhouse in the 17th and 18th centuries, declining in wealth and resources. The national independence movements in India, chiefly led by Mahatma Gandhi and aided by the crumbling economy of Great Britain because of the two World Wars, achieved India's freedom in 1947. The path to India's political independence involved much violence and sacrifice, though. Thousands of people became victims of British brutality. The partition that saw the formation of India and Pakistan was a violent process too.

Indian Independence day presents each Indian with a host of duties and responsibilities towards maintaining the freedom that our ancestors achieved with commitment and tireless efforts.

August 29

NATIONAL SPORTS DAY

Why should we celebrate National Sports Day?

Do you like to run, jump or skip and hold a contest with your friends about them? Sports not only entertain us, but also disciplines our mind and body. The National Sports Day is celebrated on August 29, the birthday of one of the greatest sportspersons India has ever produced, Dhyan Chand.

Dhyan Chand is one of the greatest hockey players in the history of the sport. Known for his extraordinary skill in scoring goals, Dhyan was instrumental in winning three Olympic gold medals for India in 1928, 1932 and 1936, during an era when India dominated the field hockey. National Sports Day, therefore, is observed each year to celebrate his spirit and to promote sporting activities in the country.

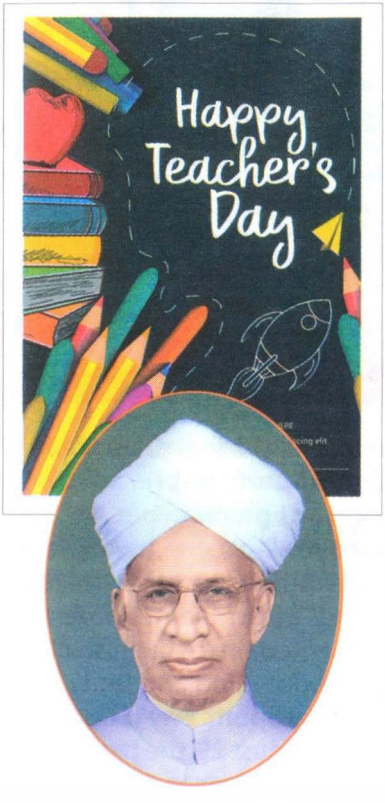
Celebrating sports is to celebrate the spirit of sportsmanship and respect. The chief purpose of the National Sports Day is to raise awareness about the significance of sports and bring to the attention of people its advantages on the human body and society in general.

NATIONAL TEACHERS' DAY

Do we have a national Teachers' Day?

While the rest of the world celebrates Teachers' Day on October 5, the celebrations in India are on September 5. September 5 marks the birth of a great teacher who went on to become India's second President: Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. Dr. Radhakrishnan was not only a great teacher, but also an exemplary academician, scholar and philosopher.

Dr. Radhakrishnan was appreciated greatly by his students and colleagues. When he was the President, his students requested him to allow them to celebrate his birthday on a grand scale, and he said that he would be glad if they celebrated the day as Teachers' Day. Thus, September 5 was dedicated to the teachers since 1962.



Dr. S. Radhakrishnan

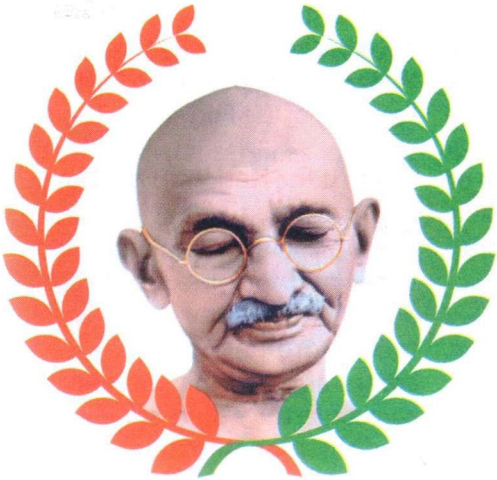
Schools across the country come up with various activities to celebrate the special day. Students take up the role of the teacher and engage classes that day. Teachers' Day is an opportunity to remind society of the importance of teachers in the formation of individuals in society.

GANDHI JAYANTI

How important is Gandhi Jayanti to our nation?

Gandhi was not merely a politician to India. Had he been one, he would have legitimately claimed to be the first prime minister of the nation. He was an incredible mix of a politician and spiritual master. Gandhi's birthday, which falls on October 2, is celebrated as Gandhi Jayanti in India.

Gandhi commanded a moral force that not many world leaders have ever managed to possess in their life. The whole of India was at his beck and call. When he started a fast-unto-death Sathyagraha, people took to the streets in support of the cause whatever it was. When Gandhi suggested boycotting of foreign goods, the crowd heaped all of them together and burned them in the streets. For his Dandi March, thousands of people joined him against the notorious salt law. Gandhi showed the world a new path: the path of love and protest through non-violence.



Mahatma Gandhi

Gandhi was not made of common clay; rather he was the fulfillment of the needs of the time. Einstein, one of the greatest scientists the world has ever seen, rightly said of him; 'I believe that Gandhi's views were the most enlightened of all the political men of our time'.

October 8

INDIAN AIRFORCE DAY

Why do we observe the Indian Air Force Day?

A nation defends and protects itself by virtue of three military forces: the Army, Navy and Air Force. On October 8, we observe Indian Air Force Day.

The Indian Air Force is one of the most competent forces in the world. Fourth largest in size, the force was established on October 8, 1932. It was the British who founded the force, then known as Royal Indian Air Force. The name continued to be in use even after India gained its Independence from the British. The prefix Royal was removed from the title when our government got our own constitution and became a republic in 1950. The uniforms, badges, brevets and insignia that the Air Force has today remain more or less the same that were adopted at the establishment of the Force in 1932.

When is the National Post Day?

Have you ever sent an inland letter card to someone? In the age of the Internet and social media, ordinary post has become rare; and the arrival of a card or letter would bring nostalgic memories to the receiver. The Postal service has been providing invaluable services to the Indian society for over 150 years.

October 10

NATIONAL POST DAY

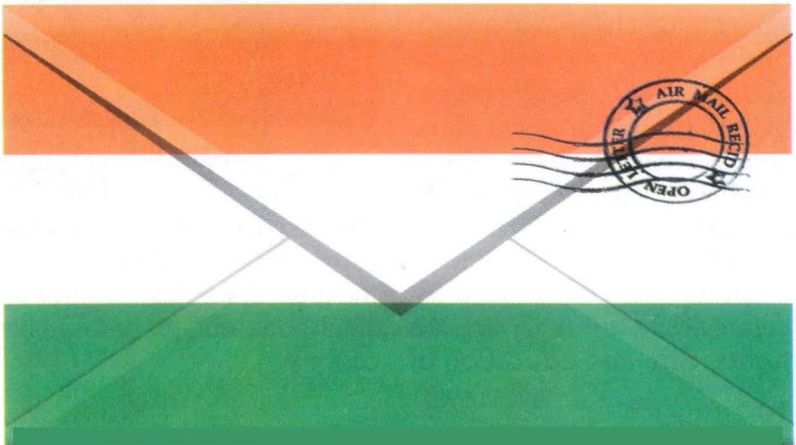
National Post Day is celebrated on October 10.

India Post was founded by the British in 1854. In 1864, the postal service was handling about 4.3 crore letters and over 45 lakh newspapers annually in a vast country like India. From then onwards, the magnitude of the task has only gone up and today in an age of emails, mobile phones and faxes, the postal service has remained the largest mode of communication in India.

The Indian postal celebration is an extension of World Post Day. It is extremely difficult to deliver postal services in India with such diversity in culture, tradition and tough geographical terrains. Yet, the Indian postal department has kept serving the nation with admirable zeal and enthusiasm.

What is the relevance of celebrating Children's Day on Nehru's birthday?

Everyone loves to be in the company of children. Their energy, cheerfulness and innocence are infectious, and we feel like growing younger and being one among them. Children's Day in India is celebrated on November 14, on the birthday of Jawa-



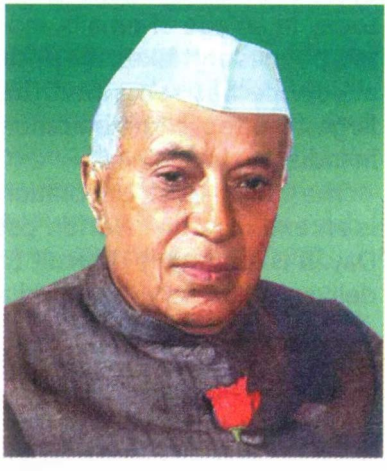
November 14

CHILDREN'S DAY

harlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India.

Jawaharlal Nehru loved children. He once said, 'I may not have time for adults, but I have enough time for children'. His *Letters from a Father to his Daughter*, written when he was spending time in Allahabad Jail in 1928, is a testimony to his vision for bringing up children in a warm and proactive relationship with nature. He considered children as the future of the nation. Fondly called Chacha ji, Nehru worked admirably for the education, progress and welfare of the children of India.

Children's Day should increase awareness regarding the rights, care and education of children. The day is an occasion to remember and strive to be like the great statesman, who loved children as much as he loved his country.



Jawaharlal Nehru

When is Indian Navy Day?

December 4 is the Indian Navy Day. Indian Navy safeguards the Indian waters and coasts.

The Naval Force or maritime force is designed to defend the nation against threats that come through the seas. The maritime history of India dates back about 6,000 years, as navigation was popular in the Indus Valley civilization.

The Maurya Empire, the Kalinga Empire and the Vijayanagara Empire were known maritime powers during their reign. Shivaji Bhosale of the Maratha Empire is considered the Father of the Indian Navy. The Indian Navy founded by the East India Company came into force in 1612. Today, the Indian Navy plays a great role in securing the marine borders of the country as well as enhancing the international relations of India through many ways like seaport visits, joint exercises, humanitarian missions and calamity relief. The modern Indian navy has undergone speedy renovation in order to enhance its strength in the Indian Ocean region.

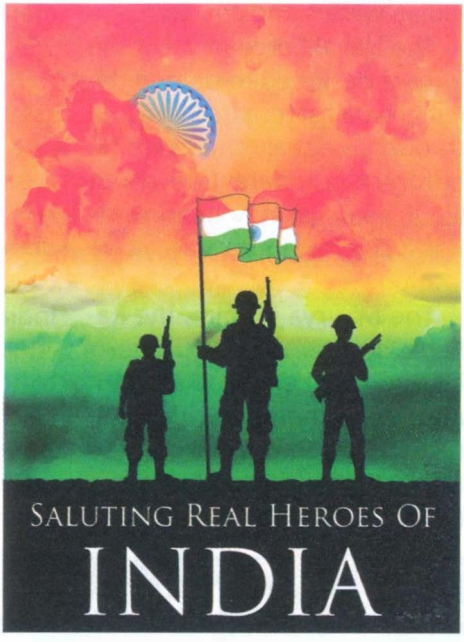
Navy Day in India is observed to honour the courageous attack by the Navy on the Karachi harbour during the Indo-Pakistan war in 1971 and pay respects to all the martyrs of that war.

INDIAN ARMED FORCES FLAG DAY

Why does our nation remember the Armed Forces?

The Army, the Navy and the Air Force, three wings together known as the armed forces, defend a nation from extraneous threats. Indian Armed Forces Flag Day, celebrated on December 7, is observed to respect and cherish the services of the armed forces and to collect funds for the well-being of soldiers.

The observance started in 1947 and ever since, the sacrifice of the men in uniform who valiantly fought on the borders to safeguard the country's honour is remembered and appreciated. On this day, small flags are distributed to the general public across the country and the funds collected, are utilised for the welfare of defence personnel and their families.



The Armed Forces are rendering invaluable services to our nation. The day is an opportunity to thank them and remember them in a special way.

Why is National Farmers Day an important day of observance for us?

Do you know that the food that we consume every day reaches us through a chain of many people? A morsel of

December 23

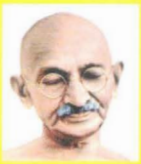
NATIONAL FARMERS DAY

bread before it landed on our palm was a seed that was sown in a field, cared for and harvested by a farmer, bought and sold by businessmen, before being purchased and brought home by our parents from the market. While all links of the chain are important, the indispensable link is the farmer. While farming remains the foundation stone of any society, it hardly receives the respect and dignity it deserves. In India, the National Farmers Day, popularly known as Kisan Diwas, is celebrated on December 23.

The day is celebrated in the honour of Chaudhary Charan Singh who was the fifth Prime Minister of India. Charan Singh belonged to a peasant family; and therefore, it was easy for him to relate to the problems of the farmers. He introduced many policies in favour of farmers and he was able to bring together all the farmers against the landlords and moneylenders who exploited them.

In India, more than 70 per cent of the population depends on agriculture for income in one form or the other. The observance of Kisan Diwas sheds light on the plight of the farmers in India and the vital services they render to the nation.

ANNIVERSARIES



150TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the our nation, is an inspiring person, who shaped world history. Gandhiji stands out among the great men of the world as a symbol of non-violent resistance to political and social repression.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born on October 2nd, 1869 in Gujarat. He became the leader of a movement that attracted millions in the struggle for freedom. He was a strong advocate of nonviolence. India got freedom on August 15th, 1947. Gandhiji was assassinated on January 30th, 1948.

The year 2019 marks the 100th Birth anniversary of Dr. Vikram Sarabhai, the father of the Indian Space Programme. He was born on 12th August 1919.

Dr. Sarabhai has put India on the international map in the field of space research. In 1962, he became Chairman of the Indian National Committee for Space Research. The establishment of the Indian Space Research Organization, also known as ISRO, was one of his greatest achievements. Dr. Sarabhai died on 30th December 1971.

100TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

500TH DEATH ANNIVERSARY

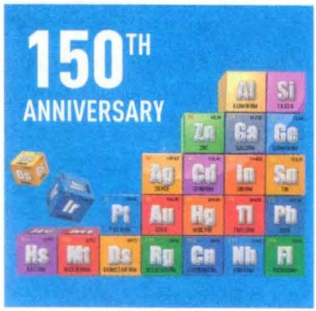
Leornardo da Vinci was perhaps the most widely talented person ever to have lived. He was a consummate painter and sculptor, a great inventor, military engineer, scientist, botanist, and mathematician!

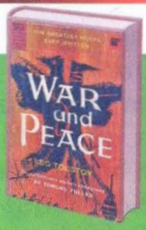
He lived during the Renaissance in Italy and while working in Milan as an artist, he began writing texts for his students and apprentices. His notebooks covered more than 1000 pages of observations and illustrations. They remained unpublished for more than a century, and were printed only after his death.

He was born on April 15th 1452 and died on May 2nd 1519.

The periodic table gives us information about element symbols, atomic numbers, and atomic weights. It brings order to information about the chemical elements and helps chemists to understand why elements react as they do.

The milestone in the development of the periodic table was set by the Russian chemist Dmitri Mendeleev in 1869, who is acknowledged as the 'father' of the periodic table- though the title is also claimed by the German scientist Lothar Meyer. Today, the periodic table organizes the elements by order of increasing atomic number.





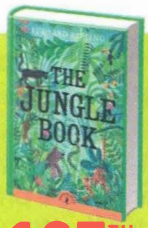
150TH
YEAR OF PUBLICATION

2019 marks the 150th year of one of the greatest novels ever written – Leo Tolstoy's 'War and Peace'. This classic work from Russia was first published in the book form in 1869.

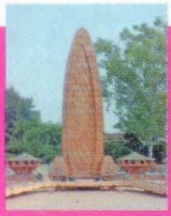
Tolstoy took almost seven years to finish this epic work, and a Russian magazine named 'Messenger' serialised some portions of it during 1865-67. But the full novel came out as a book only in 1869. The story, woven around Napoleon's invasion of Russia, covers a period of over fifteen years. The unique literary style and the historical context make 'War and Peace' a monumental work.

Is there anyone who isn't familiar with the famous character 'Mowgli'? Hopefully none. The main character of the evergreen 'The Jungle Book', a collection of stories written by Rudyard Kipling, is a huge part of our childhood. 'The Jungle Book' was first published in 1894.

Mowgli is a human child raised by wolves in the jungle. In these tales, the animals proved to be both Mowgli's allies and adversaries. Baloo the bear, Bagheera the panther along with many others, are Mowgli's friends. But Shere Khan the tiger is his enemy. The stories are set in a forest in India.



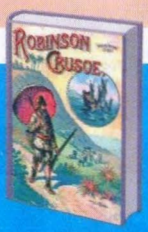
125TH
YEAR OF PUBLICATION



100TH ANNIVERSARY

The Jallianwala Bagh massacre was a turning point in our freedom movement. The British troops under the command of Colonel Reginald Dyer, opened fire on unarmed Indians on 13th April 1919. This event took place in the heart of Amritsar. Hundreds were killed, and thousands were injured. This was followed by widespread protests across a grieving country.

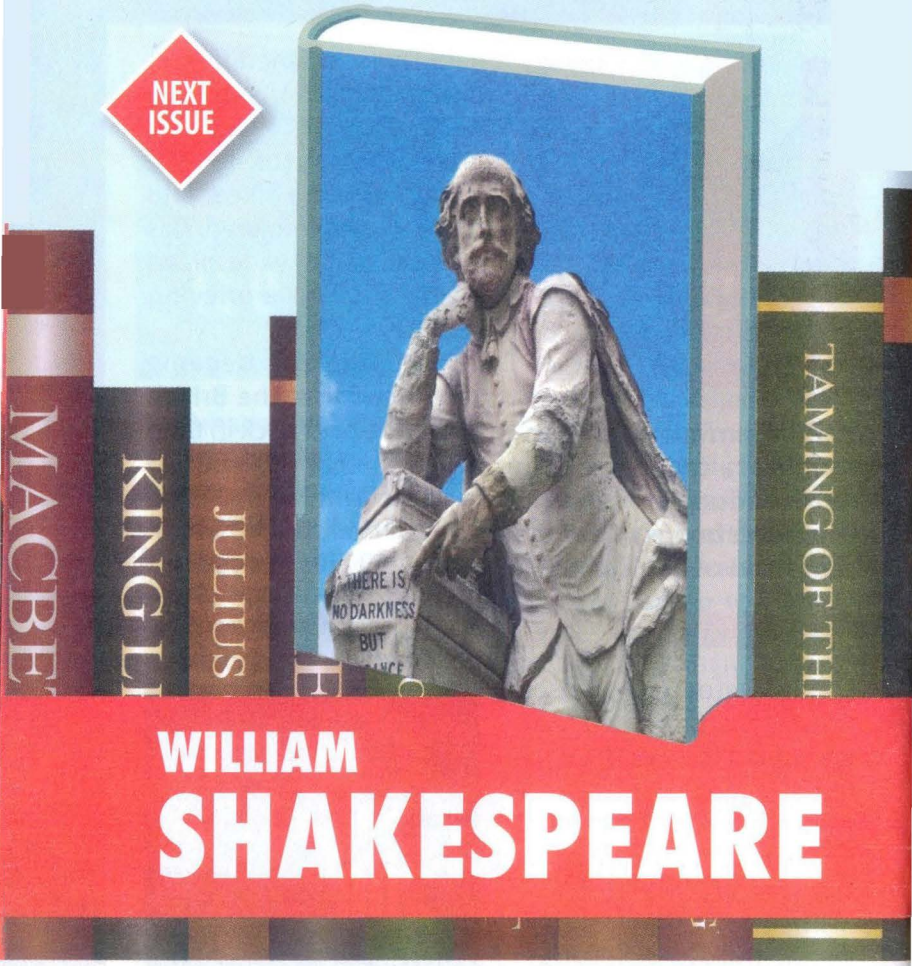
Many Indians became convinced that the British had to be paid back in their own coin- that violence had to be met with violence. The 100th anniversary of that cruel incident falls this year.



300TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

Daniel Defoe's 'Robinson Crusoe' has fascinated readers around the world, for the last 300 years. Daniel Defoe was an English writer, famous for his novel Robinson Crusoe that was published in 1719.

The story is about a shipwrecked man called Robinson Crusoe, and his adventures on a deserted island where he is washed ashore. One reason for its popularity is that it is packed with excitement and adventure, with sailing ships, stormy seas, and guns. Without doubt, Defoe's Robinson Crusoe established a realistic style of fiction, and set the tone for modern novels.



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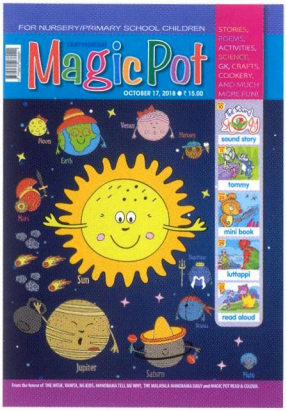

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